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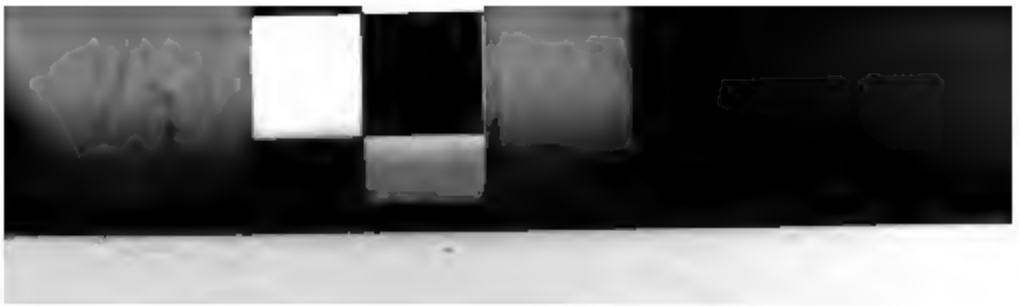

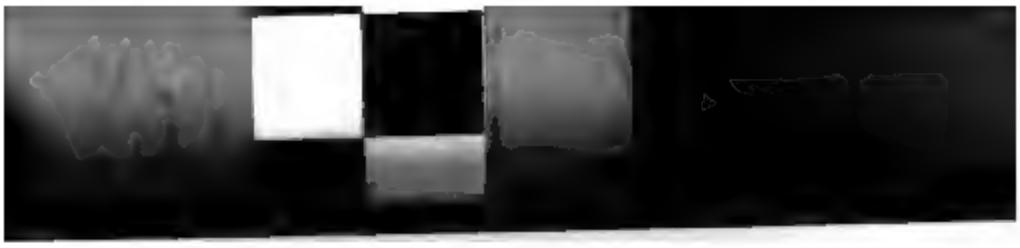

SECOND LOVE;

OR,

BEAUTY AND INTELLECT.

A NOVEL.

BY

MRS. TROLLOPE,

AUTHOR OF

"FATHER EUSTACE," "THE LOTTERY OF MARRIAGE,"

"PETTICOAT GOVERNMENT," ETC.

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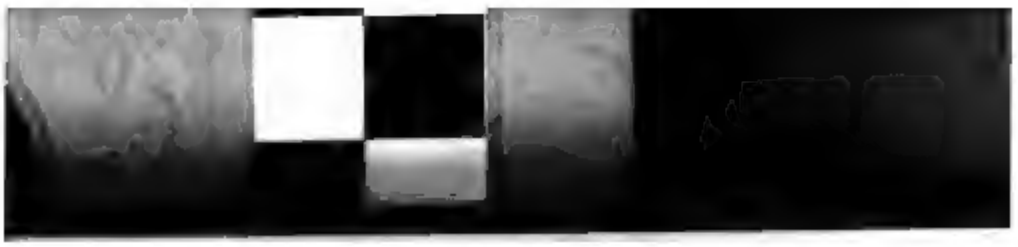

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SECOND LOVE;

OR,

BEAUTY AND INTELLECT.

CHAPTER I.

THERE are few pleasures more innocent, or rather, let me boldly say at once, that there can be no pleasure more innocent than that which we derive from the contemplation of beautiful scenery; it may, indeed, occasionally involve some danger to life or limb, but I know of no moral evil to which it can lead us, and this is saying quite enough to justify all the labour and cost which we bestow, year after year, in pursuit of it.

Yet, in saying no more of it, we should fall

far short of doing the subject justice; for eloquent sermons might be preached, and glorious hymns might be sung, both to demonstrate the spiritual profit that we derive from it, and to thank the Bounteous Giver of all Good for sending an awakening call for love and praise to our hearts through a medium so fraught with innocent enjoyment.

Those persons are greatly mistaken, I think, who in their moral estimate of the English people attribute to restlessness, and a mere love of locomotion, the strong predilection for travelling for which we are noted; at any rate it would be but fair, when more causes than one suggest themselves in explanation of the fact, to give us occasionally credit for being influenced by such as are the most respectable.

And, in truth, it would be difficult to acquit any one of a propensity to form a perverse judgment, who could have seen the little family party which I am about to present to the reader, without attributing to them some higher motive for bringing themselves to the

spot where we shall find them, than anything which could have been produced by a mere inclination to move from one place to another. This party consisted of four persons, three of them ladies, and the fourth a gentleman, whose tall and dignified aspect and highly intelligent countenance precluded all possibility of suspicion that he was idly wandering along the fine mountain-road that leads from Glengarif to Killarney, with no higher purpose than that of removing from one place and getting to another. Of the three ladies who were with him one was his wife, and the two others his daughters.

It would have been impossible that any eye at all practised in discerning to what order and class in society all the unknown individuals it encounters are likely to belong, should feel any doubt, after the very first glance, that Mr. Selcroft was a clergyman. Nevertheless, he was not one of those who, under the influence of the unfortunate schism which now unhappily divides our church, have recourse to a peculiar form of waistcoat in order unmis-

takeably to distinguish themselves as much by outward appearance as by inward conviction from their little-esteemed brethren adversaries. Mr. Selcroft did not even wear a white neckcloth—at least not on the Glengarif road on a stormy morning. Nevertheless, Mr. Selcroft looked too decidedly like a clergyman to have been easily mistaken for anything else. His lady was a very pretty, lady-like looking person, and his daughters were, as might naturally be expected, prettier still; for the eldest of the two was just one-and-twenty, and the younger somewhat more than two years her junior. Their conveyance was a common Irish car, the construction of which obliged the family to divide themselves somewhat unsociably, two being on one side of it, and two on the other. But, even so, they contrived to enjoy the striking scenes through which they were passing with more of equality than might have been expected, considering that the wild mountain view upon which every eye not very strangely constituted must gaze with delight, spread itself before the father and youngest

daughter on one side, while the mother and the eldest girl had their eyes turned wholly away from it as they sat. But Mrs. Selcroft, though the very gentlest being in the world, and unfeignedly contented to recede upon all occasions from any claim she might have to what was first or best, was almost as ready witted as she was gently tempered, and no sooner perceived the nature and amount of the privation which being on the off-side of the car inflicted on her and her daughter Lucy, than she proposed, and executed with great activity, the clever scheme of kneeling upon the seat they occupied, and by this means, though not quite at their ease perhaps, they contrived to get sight of the vapoury, mysterious-looking valley which divided them from the sullen barrier of dark mountains which formed their horizon.

There is a strange, uncouth wildness in this mountain scenery which is very exciting to the imagination even in fair weather, and when no sound ruder than the murmuring of a soft summer gale is heard amidst its deep solitudes;

but the day on which the Selcroft family were removing themselves from Glengarif to Killarney, the atmosphere was exactly in the state to exhibit the romantic peculiarities of the scene with the greatest effect.

The wind was rising when the party left Glengarif, but there was at that time no rain, and Mr. Selcroft fancied that they should have nothing worse to encounter than the fitful blasting of a summer gale, which, though it might have been alarming if encountered on the beautiful lake to which they were proceeding, was not likely, he thought, to annoy them much on terra firma. But herein Mr. Selcroft reckoned without his host; for his host just then was the spirit of the mountain, and such a mountain as none but a stranger in the land could have looked upon without a sort of trembling suspicion that if the spirit of any storm should happen to pay a visit to it, they were likely to make wild work together in their gambols.

It is rarely, in any weather, that the eye can penetrate all the deep, mysterious hollows

of that vapoury region. Cloud and mist seem ever to be wandering there, and so sudden and so fitful are the blasts which are continually playing their mad freaks among them, that at one moment you are looking down into a sort of misty vacuum that has no visible boundary, and in the next, ere you can say 'tis gone, huge mountains, of purple blackness, start up, and stare at you, as it were, with their stern iron aspect, and seem so close upon you that, did they make a second step forwards, much less violent than the first, they must inevitably crush you to atoms, and then bury you for ever.

But as yet, while the car was slowly gaining the highest point of road, no stranger to the region was at all likely to be aware of what might be expected to follow the sort of sullen stillness that seemed to have taken possession of it. The travellers had been already electrified by the partial disappearance of the mist at different points of the landscape, and the sudden appearance in its stead of sundry promontories and precipices, which were invi-

sible the moment before. But though this produced an effect both strange and startling, there was much more of interest than alarm excited by the contemplation of it; and the father, mother, and daughters, were all straining their eyes to penetrate into the depths of the valley, with a smile of pleased surprise on every face as they watched the variations which each moment seemed to produce in the scene before them. But suddenly these amusing effects of the vanishing, and again returning, mist, ceased altogether; a dark lurid cloud appeared to envelop every object with one uniform, misty veil, which rested motionless, and with equal density, upon the valley immediately beneath them, and upon the distant mountains which enclosed it.

"What a very strange climate this seems to be," said Mrs. Selcroft; "it does not continue the same for two minutes together."

"And where is all the wind gone?" said Lucy. "It was howling, only a few minutes ago, as if every cave on the hill-side were the dwelling of a whole settlement of lions and

tigers. And now everything is as still as death."

At the very instant that she ceased speaking, the deep stillness which had excited her wonder ceased too, and a long, loud, wild blast of wind swept over them, which not only overwhelmed, but silenced their voices—for they were terror-struck.

The mist from the valley was suddenly cleared away as if by magic, and every bush and bramble, every tree and shrub, nay, the very stunted grass itself, became agitated, and thrown into such violent movement, that Lucy exclaimed, in an accent half playful, half terrified, "The whole world seems going into convulsions!"

Another moment, however, sufficed to chase all playfulness, and left an unmixed feeling of terror with them all, for the dim air seemed for an instant to be set on fire, so bright was the tremendous flash of lightning that burst upon them. The roaring, rattling thunderclap rather accompanied, than followed it, and there was not one of the party, horse included,

who did not feel the awful consciousness of being in the very birth-place of the storm.

No one spoke, but the hand of Louisa had unconsciously grasped that of her father, and the arm of the mother was thrown round Lucy. Flash followed flash, and ere one burst of thunder had ceased to roar, another followed it, all being reverberated by the surrounding hills till the whole earth seemed uttering one universal groan.

There was a great deal of very grand sublimity in the sight, and in the sound; but the Selcroft family were, one and all, much too seriously terrified to relish it; nor was this terror lessened by the return of the mist which the gusty wind had driven from the valley; but it was no longer mist alone which rendered it difficult to discern any object at the distance of a dozen yards, for the rain now fell in torrents, and seemed almost to blind both horse and driver, for both hung down their heads as if the looking about them could be of no further use; and the horse continued to trot, and the driver to whip, very much as if

they did not very well know what they were about.

But if the horse, the driver, and the driven, were one and all too much overpowered in spirit by the violence of the storm to know very well where they were, or what they were about, it was not so with all whom accident had placed on the Glengariff road on that tempestuous morning; for one solitary figure had become visible as the carriage approached it, the attitude and aspect of which spoke more of excitement and admiration than of terror.

It was that of a young man, and, notwithstanding his lank locks and dripping garments, very evidently that of a handsome man, who, not contented by what he could see of the elemental uproar from the level of the road, had stationed himself on an isolated hillock which enabled him to look over the low fence which at that point skirted the precipice into the very deepest hollows of the valley beneath which instant seen and instant gone, as the vivid lightnings blazed, and passed away, ap-

peared to fascinate his gaze with all the charm of half-seen mystery.

Whether it were the sudden apparition of this tall, conspicuous figure before the eyes of the poor storm-buffetted horse, or that the vivid flash which occurred at the same moment met the eye of the startled animal more than any which had preceded it, may be doubtful; but certain it is that, at the moment the car passed the conspicuous figure of the storm-gazer, the unlucky beast gave a sudden spring across the road, and thereby turned the vehicle round so briskly that Louisa, who was quite unprepared for such a movement, was jerked from her seat by it, and, to the terror of her startled family, was left stretched upon the ground, while during a dreadful minute or two they were drawn too rapidly away from her to permit of their making any immediate effort to leave the carriage.

The terrified mother and sister uttered a fearful scream, which, if not exactly echoed by Mr. Selcroft, was at least accompanied by such an exclamation from him as indicated as much

alarm as any scream could have done, and, with as little delay as was consistent with prudence, he contrived to extricate himself from the violently jolting car, and to run back to his prostrate daughter.

However earnest the gaze, or however sublime the admiration, with which the young stranger by the road side had been contemplating the storm, this catastrophe effectually restored his presence of mind; which was proved by his dashing with great velocity after the car, which it was evident the driver could not contrive to stop, instead of flying to the prostrate young lady, who was already supported in the arms of her father.

To her it was very evident that he could be of no use, to the other ladies he might; and great was their joy and their gratitude, when his vigorous arm succeeded in making the restive steed stand still, while they disembarrassed themselves from what they conceived to be a very dangerous situation. Certain it is that the horse would have run away had he been possessed of as much power as

will to do it; for he was horribly frightened, and shook all over like an aspen leaf. But hired car-horses are not more likely to run away in Ireland, than hackney-coach horses in England; so he was speedily brought to reason, and left in a tolerably composed state of mind in the hands of the driver, while the young stranger joined the group round the still recumbent Louisa.

CHAPTER II.

NOTHING could be much more romantic, if I correctly understand the meaning of that rather silly-sounding word, than the situation of the parties I have now introduced to the reader, as well as the aspect of the scene which surrounded them. Louisa Selcroft was a very, *very* pretty girl, and though at that moment her cheeks and lips were as colourless as the blossom of the bella donna lily, she scarcely looked less lovely now than when, as was the case on ordinary occasions, the tint of the rose was blended with it.

The abounding ringlets of her silky, light-brown hair which had been pushed back by her father as her uncovered head rested on his arm, hung in beautiful disorder upon her shoulders; and there was something so touchingly helpless in her attitude, and so confidingly resigned in the expression of her sweet features as her cheek lay upon her father's breast, that it would have been difficult for any eye to have contemplated her with indifference.

Small chance, then, had Henry Harley, the fortunate youth whom accident had brought to the assistance of the party at this critical moment; small chance had Henry Harley of escaping the conviction that the sweet drooping flower which he then looked upon was the most perfect specimen of female loveliness that nature ever formed.

Every accident, every circumstance of the scene, added effect to its interest and its beauty. The strange mixture of light and darkness that filled the air, made the exceeding fairness of the almost fainting girl appear

so brilliant, that she truly seemed to be the point from which the light of the picture emanated. . . . The tender alarm expressed by the handsome features of the father. . . . the wild, dimly-lighted majesty of the deep valley. . . . the bare, bold, lofty outline of the surrounding hills, together with the howling wind, the pelting rain, the frequent lightning, and the grumbling roar of the thunder, that came upon them with the continual aggravation of unnumbered echoes, altogether produced so overpowering an effect upon the young man, who was himself the most romantic of mortals, that the only clear and distinct feeling of which he was conscious was a conviction that the hour was come in which the destiny of his future life was to be for ever decided.

Fortunately, however, the propriety of his manner was not affected by the poetical enthusiasm of his emotions. The kind, lady-like tone of Mrs. Selcroft's voice, and the rational composure of her words, as she bent over her daughter, kissed her forehead, and took her

occasioned by sudden terror having completely passed away, she answered all the inquiries addressed to her in a tone of sweet and youthful cheerfulness that completely banished every feeling of alarm for her safety. The manner of Mrs. Selcroft was then, as ever, the very perfection of amiable, equable, unvarying gentleness; and that of Lucy, the eldest daughter, had, constitutionally as it should seem, too large a proportion of gaiety in it to place her under any circumstances in danger of betraying any very serious emotions.

Henry Harley, therefore, was speedily relieved from his little embarrassment; but the storm went flashing, howling, pelting on, and the piteous plight to which the draperies of the three ladies were reduced, each of them having herself become a sort of *passing shower*, induced him, as the horse was now standing most profoundly still, to urge them to replace themselves in the car, and hasten, with all the speed they could make, to the nearest shelter.

"And what is to become of you, my young friend?" said Mr. Selcroft, addressing Henry, in a tone of friendly interest.

"I shall do perfectly well, my dear sir," replied the young man. "I have been already three weeks in Ireland, walking, upon an average, about twenty miles a day; and getting wet to the skin in a passing shower is by no means a novelty to me. I shall get back to my old quarters at Killarney in excellent good time for dinner."

"To Killarney?" returned Mr. Selcroft. "We, also, are going to Killarney. I wish we could manage to be of any use to you; but I fear that our queer vehicle would prove incapable of holding five, were we to make the attempt."

"Do not dream of such a thing, my dear sir," replied the young man, eagerly. "But to prove to you," he added, "that my dress, light as it looks, can keep out water, and shelter pasteboard,"—(and, as he spoke, he drew a card-case from his waistcoat pocket,)—"I will beg permission to present my card,

and also to inquire for your party to-morrow morning." The card was courteously received; and then the young stranger ventured to offer his arm to Mrs. Selcroft, to assist her through the mud to the spot where the car was stationed.

The beautiful Louisa had already taken the arm of her father for support, and Lucy very contentedly followed alone. When Harley, however, held out his hand to assist Mrs. Selcroft to mount the car, Louisa perceived that it was his left hand that was extended for the purpose. "I am afraid you have hurt yourself?" she said.

"Oh no! Nothing that deserves the name of a hurt," he replied, still keeping his right hand in his bosom.

"You have strained your wrist, I am sure!" exclaimed Mr. Selcroft. "You strained it in stopping the horse."

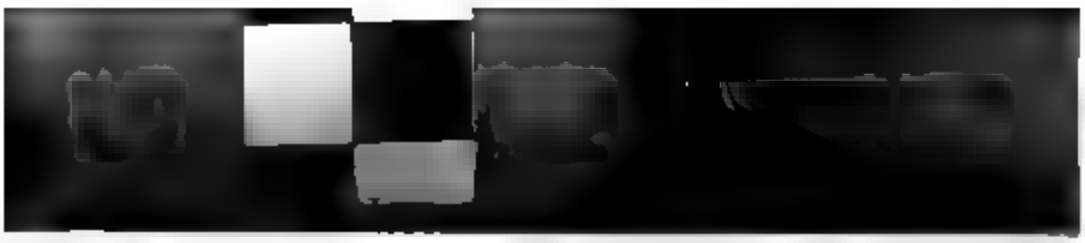
"I believe I did," replied Harley, quietly.

"Then you positively must not put yourself in a fever by walking to Killarney," said Mr. Selcroft. "Neither of the three ladies take

much room. You can all three sit on one side, can you not?"

The three ladies had but one voice, as they eagerly replied in the affirmative; but the young man was not to be tempted by the flattering proposal. He did not wish, however, that this refusal should check the progress of the acquaintance; and, quite as much to prevent this, as to spare himself fatigue, he said, "I shall probably be at Killarney as soon as you are, but you would greatly aid my progress if you would have the kindness to convey my knapsack."

This was of course most readily agreed to, and having arranged such summer wraps as they had, to the best advantage, and heartily shaken their dripping umbrellas, the Selcroft family repacked themselves in the car, the father and mother assuring their new acquaintance very cordially that they should hope to see him again at Killarney, while the fair daughters, by their friendly smiles, very intelligibly repeated the invitation; and then they



drove off, leaving the young man standing in the middle of the road, with his straw hat very gracefully held above his head, though it was done with his left hand.

CHAPTER III.

THE vehemence of the storm was by this time over; rain still fell, but softly, and lightly; the wind was hushed, the lightning passed away, and the thunder slept.

For a short time the unsociably divided family contented themselves by conversing in pairs, but they had all too much to say to each other to endure this long, for they were really and truly a very united family; and by the time the rain had ceased entirely, and the sun had began to shine a little, they had contrived to turn themselves about, and to

twist themselves round sufficiently to make their conversation pretty general.

"Has not this turned out well in the way of a really romantic adventure?" said Mr. Selcroft, laughing. "We have evidently laid the foundation-stone of a very sentimental friendship with this young gentleman, and that, too, without even knowing his name."

"If you do not know his name, papa, it is your own fault," said Lucy; "for you have got it in your pocket."

"Most true! and here it is, ladies——very simple, very concise; HENRY HARLEY, neatly printed in capital letters; but, for your sakes, I am sorry to say, unaccompanied by any address that might assist you to satisfy your very natural curiosity."

"I do not think any address could do much for us in that way," said Louisa; "for it could do no more than indicate that he was a gentleman, and on that point I should suppose we must be all pretty well satisfied already."

"He certainly has the air and manner of a

gentleman," returned her father. "Don't you think so, my dear?" he added, twisting himself round so as to be heard on the other side of the unsociable vehicle.

"Yes, indeed," replied Mrs. Selcroft; "both his look and manner are very gentlemanlike, and I have no doubt that he *is* a gentleman, though probably not a very wealthy one."

"And why not?" replied Mr. Selcroft. "Because he was walking instead of being in such a thing as this? Is that your reason?"

"No, my dear, I don't mean *that*, I assure you. I am perfectly well satisfied with this carriage myself, though I confess I do not think it very aristocratic," replied the lady; "but though I can easily understand that an active young man might prefer walking, I really do not think that any gentleman would choose to carry his own baggage, unless he were too poor to pay any one else for doing it. Besides, William, dear, the style of his dress, you know, was certainly hardly respectable. What do you think, Lucy?"

"Oh! I'm sure I don't know," replied Lucy.

"And what did you think of his toilet, Louisa?" said Mrs. Selcroft, contriving to touch the shoulder of her youngest daughter with the end of her parasol.

"I was too much frightened, mama, to think about his dress," replied Louisa; "but it certainly never entered my head to think that it was not the dress of a gentleman."

"Mercy on me, my dear child! What are you talking about?" replied her mother. "Why, he had a regular carter's frock on, Louisa, only it was made of tolerably fine brown holland instead of white coarse dowlas; but it was a carter's frock for all that; and his straw-hat is exactly the same as the English hay-makers use. I think it is very likely that he is the son of a better sort of a gentleman-farmer, and I should not be at all surprised to find that he had been at college, on account of his particularly good manners. And then, I can tell you all, that his being so remarkably handsome may have more to do than you are aware of, in leading you to sup-

pose that he is well-born. By-the-bye, I should not be at all surprised if it turned out that he was going to be ordained; for it is quite a certain fact, that, taken as a body, the clergy are more gentlemanlike in their appearance than any other set of men who have only an equal share of this world's wealth to boast of."

"If that last suggestion be correct, my dear," said Mr. Selcroft, "and I really think you seem to have reasoned with your usual sagacity,—if that last suggestion be correct, he will of course deserve a greater degree of attention from us in return for his civility, than we should think of showing under any other circumstances."

"I feel almost sure that he is a clergyman!" exclaimed Louisa, almost in a whisper.

"I own I think it very likely," said her father, with a gentle smile. "And you, Lucy," he added, raising his voice, "you are sharp-sighted enough, sometimes. What do you think he is?"

"Oh! I'm sure I don't know, papa; but I can't say that 'I think he looks like a clergy-

man ; but he may be what you call a stage-player, perhaps, or he may be a gentleman of family and fortune," replied Lucy, in a tone of great indifference.

"A stage-player, my child!" replied Mr. Selcroft, gravely. "What can have put so very painful an idea into your head? I believe it, however, to be utterly devoid of foundation."

"Dear papa! what can you know about stage-players?" said Lucy, innocently. "I do not believe that you ever saw one in your life."

"Still, Lucy, I am unwilling to believe any thing of the kind of a fellow creature without better grounds for it than mere conjecture. However, it will unquestionably be my duty to be very cautious," said Mr. Selcroft, gravely. "It is not a subject to be treated jestingly. What could have suggested such a frightful idea to you?"

"I am sure I don't know, papa," said Lucy, in a very penitent voice, but with a world of latent mischief in her merry blue eye ; "I be-

lieve that I thought he looked a little like a hero of romance, or something in that line, which is the same, I suppose, as looking theatrical—isn't it?"

Mr. Selcroft was very fond of both his daughters, and very proud of them also. He was proud of the remarkable beauty of Louisa, and full of sanguine hope as to the happy effect of its influence upon her future life. In plainer English, he thought it highly probable that it would be the means of her making an advantageous marriage. Of his daughter Lucy he was proud also; but as she was less pretty, and more animated than her younger sister, it was upon her wit and general intellectual superiority that he chiefly rested his hopes of her advancement. In the case of both, however, he was deeply persuaded that their first and best claim to distinction of any kind rested upon the fact that they belonged to him. His "standing," to borrow an expressive transatlantic phrase, was such, and so high among all persons professing the same opinions as himself, that he

felt convinced no other advantage could reasonably be considered as of equal importance. Nevertheless, he knew that in the all-important business of settling a daughter in marriage nothing should be overlooked or neglected which might in any way assist in its being achieved advantageously.

But here, as it will too often happen in all things connected with worldly affairs, he found great difficulty in bringing his principles and wishes into perfect harmony. His theories respecting the proper use of the tongue, particularly the female tongue, were very strict, and if practically acted upon would have left little scope to the playful vivacity of his daughter Lucy; while the severe simplicity of dress which many of his most esteemed friends declared to be at once the best symbol and the best safeguard of female purity, was unfortunately so very unbecoming to his pretty Louisa, that he had not sufficient courage or sufficient hardness of heart to insist upon its being adopted.

After some ineffectual struggles, therefore, to

regulate both the outward and inward characteristics of himself and his family, according to the beau ideal of that division of the human race to which he declared himself to belong, namely, the Church of England evangelicals, he gradually softened down into that smoothest and gentlest sect of professing Christians who confess the necessity of bending before the evils which we are doomed to encounter in this valley of tears, but without ever vitiating the holiness of their spiritual doctrines by any admission in words, that there can be the least hope of mercy in heaven for any one holding opinions that differed from their own.

Mr. Selcroft smiled a gently pitying sort of smile upon Lucy as he replied, "The less you know of either, dear love, the better; and I shall be very sorry, and a good deal surprised also, if this young man add to your knowledge on the subject . . . . But how gloriously the afternoon is clearing up! . . . . And what a lovely contrast do these groves and forests offer to the scenes we have just left."

"Look this way!" cried Mrs. Selcroft . . . "Is not that the lake?"

The driver was applied to, and delighted them with the information that the silver flood that they now caught from time to time gleaming through the trees, was indeed the far-famed Lake of Killarney.

"Why, mama! this is a perfect forest of evergreens!" exclaimed Lucy. "Did you ever see such exquisite shades of green before? . . . I never did! So bright, so rich, so various! And then the honeysuckles, climbing with such wild luxuriance among them! How heavenly beautiful is the whole scene! It seems as if that torrent of rain had fallen on purpose to refresh every leaf and flower for our especial advantage . . . . And oh! the perfume!"

Mrs. Selcroft really enjoyed it all as much as her daughter, and there was no mixture of her systematic conformity of opinion with all that was spoken, in the assent she now gave to Lucy's reiterated declaration that it was the most beautiful scene she had ever looked

upon. Louisa, meanwhile, spoke not a word. She had been frightened by the storm and shaken by her fall, both inducing silence; but more so than either was the fact that she had fallen as violently in love as it was well possible for a young lady to do under the circumstances. Her silence, therefore, was natural enough, and so was that of her father also, for he was very observant and very sharp-sighted, and was quite as well aware as Louisa herself, that the young stranger who had fallen in with them on the road from Glengarif, had gazed upon her with unmistakeable admiration; and he was aware too that the eyes wherewith he gazed were remarkably fine eyes; and he thought it by no means improbable that his daughter Louisa might have made the same discovery, in which case it would scarcely be reasonable to expect that she should feel disposed to be very chatty.

Moreover, he had himself a good deal to think about, and felt more disposed to meditate than converse; but few words, therefore, were exchanged on their side of the carriage

during the greater part of the way from the spot where the accident had happened to that where the comfortable and beautifully-situated Victoria Hotel stood, invitingly ready to receive them on the border of the loveliest of lakes.

Yes, indeed, Mr. Selcroft had a great deal to think about, for he was naturally rather of an anxious and careful turn of mind, and over and above his professional anxieties, which, of course, involved a good many of the temporal, as well as all the eternal, concerns of his parishioners, he had much on which to meditate upon his own account, and that of his family.

Mr. Selcroft, in the academic sense of the term, was a well-educated man, and, in a drawing-room sense, a very gentleman-like one. His connexions, too, were highly respectable; that is to say, they were all classed as ladies and gentlemen, and, moreover, he had an elder sister who had been a very great beauty, and who had married a very rich man; but Mr. Selcroft himself was not a rich man;

he would have been much richer had his sister, Mrs. Smithers, been a little poorer; but it had been his object from the time of her marriage to the present hour, to convince both her and her husband, of the perfect equality of their conditions. Mr. Smithers, who was an exceedingly pompous man in his way, had no objection whatever to believing, that his lady's brother possessed about three times the income that Fate had bestowed upon him, and always believed, or appeared to believe, that such was really the case. But Mrs. Smithers did not believe, or appear to believe, any such thing, and this very unnecessary accuracy of estimate on her part, often involved her reverend brother in very inconvenient expense.

His real income was about seven hundred a-year, and five parts out of seven proceeded from his living. Of the remaining two hundred, rather more than half proceeded from his wife's little fortune, which was in the funds, and the small remainder arose from a little farm which he shared with his rich sister, and which was, in fact, the only property they inherited from their father.

Under these circumstances, it was very natural and very proper that Mr. Selcroft should feel considerable paternal anxiety concerning the future fate of his daughters; and, doubtless, he would have felt still more, had he not been fully aware of their attractions, and full of hope that they would be as fortunate as their beautiful aunt had been before them. But with such an object for ever before him, it was nearly impossible that he could treat lightly the approach of any new acquaintance who might fall in love with either of his daughters. The girls were still very young, yet, nevertheless, he had already devoted a prodigious deal of thinking to the subject, and now neither the evergreens nor the honeysuckles, no, nor the silvery gleams of the fair lake itself, could detach his thoughts from Henry Harley, and the probabilities, for and against his being of such rank and station in society, as might make it safe for him to prosecute the acquaintance.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. SELCROFT fully anticipated a visit from the young man of the mountain, as Lucy called young Harley, before the evening closed upon them, but he was mistaken; neither could he contrive to learn, without an enquiry more direct than he chose to make, whether any such guest had arrived at the hotel. It is possible that poor Louisa was a little disappointed too, for she had taken a good deal of pains in putting her dishevelled locks in order, for though pre-eminently beautiful, they did not, like those of the majority of heroines, curl

naturally; but all this labour and pains was in vain, for they saw nothing of him that night.

The reasons privately assigned by the father and daughter in the secret council-chamber of their own hearts were highly characteristic. Mr. Selcroft, after a good deal of meditation, came to the conclusion, that the hotel they were in, which was decidedly the principal one, was too expensive for him, and, therefore, he had "put up" in the little town of Killarney, which, though not very distant, was, nevertheless, scarcely near enough to permit the weary pedestrian to get to them that night, after allowing himself sufficient time for refreshment, and a necessary change of apparel.

"His arm is too painful to permit his putting on a coat," thought Louisa;—"and of course he would not come to us in such a jacket as that,—perhaps we shall never see him again!" And she sighed very deeply—too deeply indeed to have been pardonable, considering the shortness of their interview,

were it not for the peculiarly romantic circumstances under which it took place.

The night was clear, the stars were bright, and the young moon shone so invitingly, that Mr. Selcroft challenged one of his daughters to walk down with him to the borders of the lake. Louisa declared hersclf too much fatigued for any further exercise, but Lucy accepted the invitation joyously, and confessed that she believed she should have crept out by herself, rather than not have seen the lake by moonlight, had she not felt afraid of meeting fierce dogs or wild Irishmen.

Nothing could be more fresh and delicious than the state of the atmosphere, and Lucy, as she looked upon the bright green foliage, so freshly washed by the rain, gaily exclaimed that it was like going into a chamber newly swept and garnished, an expression for which she was reproved by her father, who told her that the Bible was a book to be read unceasingly but never quoted, excepting in a strictly religious sense.

"I beg pardon, papa," she replied. "I

know it, I know it, for I have been told so a million of times; but I shall always think it a great pity!—But, however, if it be wrong to remember what is so constantly to the purpose in all times and seasons, I will leave it off if I can; but don't let us talk about that now. —Don't you think it is very odd, papa, that our young man of the mountain has not called upon us this evening? It would have been such a natural thing to do, that is to say, if he wished it."

"I am not quite sure that it would have been a natural thing to do; that must depend upon circumstances, my dear Lucy," replied her father. "For instance, I do not think it would have been at all natural, as you call it, for him to have walked up from Killarney, after so very fatiguing a day as he must have had."

"But how do you know that he is not lodging in the same house with us?" said Lucy.

"I certainly cannot be said to know it," replied her father, "but I have various rea-

sons for believing it. In the first place, I think that if he had been in the same house he *would* have called; and, in the next, I am rather inclined to believe that he is one of those pedestrian young tourists, who, after they have contrived to make up a little purse for an excursion, are too wise to clip their wings by frequenting the most expensive hotels on the road."

"It may be so," said Lucy, "and I dare say, papa, that you have a sharper eye for looking through the ideal covers of an imaginary banker's book than I have. My perceptions are wholly for externals, and I don't think that the youth we met on the mountains to-day was a poor lad, who counts the pence in his pocket as he trudges along."

"I did not say I thought he was, Lucy," replied her father. "You have a sad habit of exaggeration in your expressions, my dear. I never said that I thought he was a poor lad, neither would it ever enter into my head to fancy that he had any banker's book at all. You are a clever sort of a girl in some things,

Lu, but you must live a little longer before you will know at a glance who has a banker's book and who has not."

"That is very true, indeed, dear papa, and I cannot think what could have sent such a worldly-minded word into my thoughts on such a night, and in such a scene as this," said Lucy, as they drew near the little landing-place for the pleasure-boats, which, projecting a few feet from the bank, offers a delightful lounging-place from which to look out upon that sea of beauty.

"Is it not heavenly lovely, papa?" she added.

"It is very earthly lovely," he replied gravely.

"Well, then, earthly loveliness is very glorious!" she ardently exclaimed, adding after the silence of a moment or two: "I cannot think, papa, why serious people, who of course think deeply before they speak, I cannot think why they all agree to call this beautiful earth a vale of tears . . . . I hope it is not very wicked, papa, but I do not believe in my heart that

our Creator intended that we should consider it as a vale of tears, or he would not have made my heart so ready to dance with joy within me every time I look upon some new combination of essentially earth-born objects. Oh! look at that silver mirror with its rich frame of forest and of mountain! And as if this alone were not enough to satisfy our longings for beauty, and the joy it brings, just look at the effect of that mysterious countenance by which the brightness of the region above is reflected before our eyes. I do protest to you, papa, that I have very serious doubts whether it is quite right to call the world, so gloriously prepared for us, a vale of tears. If silly people will be wicked, my notion is that somehow or other they will be sure to suffer for it, as I well remember I always did, as a child, when I was naughty; and naughty boys and girls, and wicked men and women, will always, I do most firmly believe, in some way or other, be sure to find themselves very uncomfortable when their mischievous tricks are over . . . . but that is no reason why they should call this beautiful

world a vale of tears. It might be a vale of industry, plenty, intelligence, aud enjoyment, if it were not the stupid people's own fault."

"Pray, my dear Lucy, do not run on so wildly!" said her father, really looking frightened at the impropriety of her expressions. "It does not signify much *here*, certainly, as nobody can hear but myself; but I do assure you, my dear child, that you will make me very miserable if you say such improper things before other people. I would not for the world that your aunt Smithers should hear you, nor your uncle Smithers either. And as to your cousin Elizabeth, I really think she would refuse to sit in the same room with you."

"Hush, papa! Don't say that!" said Lucy, laughing, and holding up her finger in an attitude of warning. "If you should make a mistake now, dear papa, and utter a delightful promise when you meant to promise a terrible threat, the consequences might be deplorable! What should you think of it if I were to write a letter to my magnificent cousin Elizabeth,

assuring her that to the best of my knowledge and belief there was a great deal more of happiness than misery in the world, even as it now is, all rogues and roguesses included, not to mention the melancholy sprinkling of a good many buzzing, stinging insects like herself; and that for the future, as I had attained the important pinacle of twenty-one years since last we met, I intended to laugh as much as I thought proper for the future, without paying the least attention to her majestic frowns. What would you say to that, papa?"

"My dear Lucy," replied her father, endeavouring to suppress a smile, "I believe that what I ought to say would approach more nearly to a grave reproof than I should like to address to you. But you are imprudent, Lucy, in boasting of your twenty-one years, for it is only by considering you as still almost a child that I can give you the license I still allow you, with a safe conscience; and as to your writing to your cousin Elizabeth for the purpose of communicating to her any of the gay, young thoughts of your childish heart,

I very strongly recommend you to let it alone."

"Very well, papa," replied Lucy, with an air of very dutiful submission. And then their conversation fell back from the sublimities to which they had appeared to be approaching to a renewed discussion upon the probable position in life of their new acquaintance, and the awkwardness of expecting a visit from a person who might have every imaginable claim upon their civility and kindness, or who might with equal probability be one whom they would particularly wish to avoid. "Very awkward, indeed, papa," was the reply of Lucy to Mr. Selcroft's statement of the case.

"Well, then, my love," he resumed, with all his usual gentleness, but with more than common earnestness of manner, "we have but one way by which we may guard ourselves from any very serious embarrassment in consequence of this awkwardness."

"And what is that, dear papa?" returned Lucy.

"By being one and all of us, my dear child,

completely and uniformly on our guard against any approach to intimacy, till such time as we may have been able to obtain certain information as to this young man's real claims to be considered as a gentleman, and one who may be safely introduced to the companionship of young ladies as carefully educated as you and your sister have been."

"Yes, dear papa, certainly, I really think so, for though I never saw any acting, I can very easily imagine the possibility of a very handsome young man, though he may be as poor as a church mouse . . . ."

"Never name the church in that irreverend manner, my dear," said her father, interrupting her, with a frown.

"I beg pardon, papa, I really did not mean any wickedness; I was only going to say that I can imagine the possibility of being deluded into thinking exactly such a man as we met on the mountains this morning was made on purpose for young ladies to fall in love with; when all the while, perhaps, he might be just fit in reality for nothing but to black their shoes

Mr. Selcroft was silent for a moment, and then said, "Exaggeration again, my poor Lucy! Would I could teach you a little common sense, my dear child!"

"Don't despair, papa, I really think I am improving every day," she replied, "but if I am ever brought to believe in my heart that this beautiful world may, without the sin of ingratitude, be called the valley of the shadow of death, it will be in consequence of my making up my mind at last to believe in good earnest that we are ordained by some mysterious law utterly beyond the power of our intellect to comprehend, never on any occasion to say exactly either what we think, or what we feel, and that *is* living in shadow, very death-like shadow too . . . . Don't you sometimes feel this very troublesome and disagreeable yourself, dear papa?"

"I really don't understand what you mean, my dear," replied her father, "but I must not linger here listening to your rambling talk, or we shall indeed find ourselves literally in deeper shadow than would be agreeable. The moon

is very nearly set, Lucy, and as we do not know our path very well, we had better turn back before we have quite lost her light."

"Yes, it certainly is getting rather obscure, papa," replied his daughter, and by mutual consent they turned from the beautiful lake which was growing deeper and darker every moment, and retraced their steps towards the house. As they approached it they descried one of the servants of the hotel, the official napkin gleaming under his arm, and proclaiming his calling, as distinctly as if it had been a label legibly inscribed for the purpose of announcing it. "I wish, papa, that you would ask him if our young man of the mountain has come to the hotel to-night," said Lucy.

Mr. Selcroft instantly complied with her request by stopping the waiter, and saying, "Can you tell me, waiter, whether a young man, a young gentleman, wearing a loose linen dress, something like a carter's frock, has arrived here to-night?" "No, sir, I think no new company has arrived to-day but yourself, sir."

"You would hardly call his arrival company, perhaps," said Mr. Selcroft, "for he is quite alone, and travels on foot." "No, sir, we have no such person at all," replied the indignant official; "we never takes in no trampers."

Lucy laughed, but did not speak.

"Trampers!" repeated Mr. Selcroft, "I am not likely, my friend, to inquire about trampers. The young man I am inquiring about——"

"There is no new company at all arrived to-night, sir, except yourself," returned the waiter, rather testily; "the only young gentleman in the house has been here this fortnight, and that one has no need to travel on foot, for he has got his own horses with him." And having said this, he walked off.

"We shall see nothing of our mountain hero to-night!" said Mr. Selcroft; "he has lodged himself in the little town, you may depend upon it."

CHAPTER V.

Lucy and Louisa Selcroft were sufficiently fatigued by the day's adventures to sleep very soundly when they retired to rest, despite the scratch upon Louisa's head, and the excitement of Lucy's curiosity; but nevertheless they were up, and enjoying the brightness of a summer morning after the passing away of a summer storm, by seven o'clock on the following day.

"Which way shall we walk?" said Louisa, addressing her sister, as they stepped out into the pretty flowery garden of the hotel.

"Decidedly, Louisa, you and I must walk this morning where papa and I walked last night."

And so saying she led the way across the meadow which divides the Victoria Hotel from the Lake of Killarney.

Louisa was not quite so enthusiastic a lover of landscape as her sister Lucy, nevertheless she was greatly struck and greatly delighted by the scene to which this path led her, and the two sisters stood silently linked together, arm in arm, for many minutes in delighted contemplation of it.

They were still so standing, when a rapid step approaching from behind caused them to turn round, and they beheld exactly, perhaps, what they both expected to see, namely, the tall slight figure of the HENRY HARLEY who had occupied so many of their thoughts since the moment they had lost sight of him on the road from Glengarif.

They both gave him a look of recognition sufficiently marked to be very flattering; yet nothing could be less alike than the expression of the two fair young faces thus turned

towards him. The bright eyes of Lucy laughed gaily as she returned his very respectful bow, and it was not without some difficulty that her discretion so far tempered her satisfaction as to prevent her offering to shake hands with him.

Louisa, on the contrary, made an effort to smile which was far from being successful; for to say the truth, his appearance was as welcome as it was sudden, and instead of smiling, she changed colour violently, cast her beautiful eyes upon the ground, trembled perceptibly, and felt in her heart that if she had been alone she would have liked to sit down and weep for joy.

Not a fraction of all this flattering agitation was lost on Henry Harley, but he saw it with the eyes of an adorer and not of a coxcomb. She could not possibly betray more agitation than he felt; and if he dared to flatter himself that the seeing him again was not a matter of indifference to her, the ecstatic thought only confirmed him in the persuasion that the concatenation of circumstances which

had brought them together amidst storm and tempest on the Glengarif road, was no mere effect of chance, but that it marked the most eventful moment of his life.

During the moment of silence which the embarrassment of Louisa, and the contemplation of it by Henry Harley, occasioned, Lucy had an opportunity of examining the young man with rather a critical glance; the result of which was to confirm her in the opinion that if he were not a very clever actor performing the part of a gentleman, he was one in good earnest, notwithstanding the *carter's frock*, as she called his very pretty walking-dress, and which he still continued to wear, though the delicate neatness of his appearance on the present occasion clearly proved that the "travelling pack" which he carried must contain a relay of this, to her, very strange article of dress. Nay, to her feminine eye a second glance made it evident also that it was impossible the said carter's frock could look as it did look, if it had really come out of the pack which she had seen him carry; and she there-

fore logically came to the conclusion that, strange as it seemed, he must really be travelling about with more luggage than his pack, though he found it convenient to have a pack also.

On the whole, indeed, she thought there was something very mysterious in his appearance. She was completely puzzled to understand how a man so dressed could look—not only so much like a gentleman, for with all her untravelled ignorance she could have comprehended *that*—but so peculiarly distinguished and elegant, as she now acknowledged his general appearance to be.

He still wore a straw hat too, but it was not the battered one of yesterday; and the linen which appeared at the neck and wrists was not only of snowy whiteness, but of so delicate a fabric, that the contemplative young lady was rapidly advancing in her estimate of his rank and station, and might soon have made up her mind to believe that he was some prince in disguise, when, his mute but very eloquent salutation to Louisa being performed,

he turned to her, and began conversing on their yesterday's adventure with great interest and vivacity.

They stood together thus on the margin of the lake for a few moments, and then he said, "It is very delightful, to stand here and look at the lake, but it would be a vast deal more delightful still to be upon it. Do you think your father would consent to a voyage this morning?"

"Oh, yes! I am quite sure he will have no objection. We are come all the way from England on purpose to see the far-famed Lake of Killarney, and if a boat excursion will be the best way to show it to us, I am certain he will approve it," replied Lucy.

"Should you like it?" said the young man, in a half-whisper addressed to Louisa.

She raised her eyes for the first time that morning to his face, and they met his so earnestly fixed upon her that she could not endure it for above half-a-dozen seconds without shrinking, and turning away her head; but even that was long enough to make her

forget that a question had been asked, which it was expected she should answer. "Should you like it?" he repeated, in a whisper audible only to herself, and "Yes," was the only word she uttered in reply; but was not that enough? Was it not more sweetly eloquent than any other answer of ten times its length could have been?

"Had we not better return immediately, in order to secure the best boat and the best boatman?" said Harley, eagerly, and now addressing himself exclusively to Lucy. "The house is full of tourists, I believe, and if we are not first in the field we shall not get the famous horn-player, who awakens the echoes so delightfully."

"How do you know anything about him?" said Lucy, gaily; "I thought you only arrived here this morning?"

"On the contrary I have been here for a fortnight," he replied. Louisa threw a gently reproachful glance at him. "Why did he not visit us last night?" thought she.

But Mr. Harley did not see this glance, for

he was arranging a black ribbon, which for the first time both sisters now perceived enveloped his wrist.

"How is your arm, Mr. Harley," said Lucy, eagerly; "how could we be so ungrateful as to forget it!" "I did not forget it," murmured Louisa, in an almost inaudible whisper. He heard it, however, but he had the good taste not to thank her even by a look, but addressing himself to Lucy, he replied, "You are very kind to remember it now; it was a good deal swollen last night, and upon my consulting our good landlady as to how it ought to be treated, she insisted upon my immediately going to bed, and submitting to sundry embrocations and a final poultice, which made me an absolute prisoner there. Had it not been for this troublesome discipline I should have done myself the honour of inquiring for your party last night. I hope you have none of you suffered from the adventure in any way?"

Lucy assured him that they had not, but kindly added, that they should be but half satisfied by their own escape, unless the person

who had so greatly contributed to it could assure them that the injury he had received in their service was in a fair way towards recovery.

"It is already arrived there," he replied. "My doctress is evidently a very skilful one, for I fell asleep while still suffering pain, and did not awake till it was gone."

The young man had contrived, as they turned to walk towards the house, contrary to the usual custom in such cases, to divide the sisters, and to walk between them, and in this order they were met by Mr. Selcroft.

The two gentlemen saluted each other very civilly, but the ever-anxious father was by no means very well pleased by the manner in which the stranger had contrived to renew the intercourse with his daughters. There was something, moreover, so easy in the style in which he seemed to be conversing with them, that he immediately began arranging in his secret soul some device by which he might contrive to get rid of him altogether. He felt, indeed, that the graceful figure before

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of the good gifts which the especial favour of Providence had bestowed upon them, were they to permit this pretty jewel which had been so bountifully cast into their little treasury, to be thrown away.

Concerning Lucy he believed his duty to lie in a very different line of conduct. He thought her exceedingly clever, and not only very capable of taking care of herself, but moreover of a disposition which might make it difficult for any one else to take care of her effectually; besides, he felt that she was an odd girl, and that he did not always understand her. But the intellectual superiority for which, perhaps, he gave her more credit than she deserved, was very dear and more precious to his paternal feelings, as he was quite convinced it was derived from himself, though it did not always show itself in a way likely to suggest this idea of family resemblance to any one else of her acquaintance.

Deeply meditating, therefore, on his fatherly duties towards Louisa, and on the present exigency which so evidently called them into

action, he walked back with the trio towards the house, saying very little, but rapidly revolving a vast variety of little schemes for getting rid of their pedestrian acquaintance without disappointing himself and his family, by moving away from the beauties of Killarney before they had explored them.

While thus deeply musing, he unconsciously, perhaps, relaxed his pace, and fell back a step or two behind his daughters and their companion.

"What great effects from trivial causes spring!"

As Mr. Selcroft thus fell behind the rest of the party, his eye unconsciously fixed itself on the heel of Henry Harley's boot.

Mr. Selcroft had a very handsome leg and foot, and, in common with most persons thus favoured by nature, he was habitually more attentive to boots and shoes than individuals less fortunate in this respect. His eye, as I have said, now fell upon the heel of Henry Harley's boot, and the effect seemed really magical. In an instant he felt that this

unknown individual was a gentleman of fashion and fortune, for such boots were so *very* dear, that none but a rich man would wear them at all, and certainly no one less illustrious than a "man of fashion," *par excellence*, would ever dream of wearing such, while making an excursion on foot to the Lake of Killarney.

In a moment he was again in a line with the three young people, and as full of lively chit-chat as Lucy herself; his whole air and manner seemed changed, and greatly to the satisfaction of both the girls, he himself began talking of the exceeding beauty of the whole region, and of the necessity of finding out the best way of seeing all that was most admired in the neighbourhood.

This, of course, naturally led to the discussion of the best scheme, and after a few questions asked by Mr. Selcroft, and answered by Henry Harley with the air of a man who knew extremely well what he was talking about, it was agreed between them that the young man of the mountain should be intrusted with all the arrangements necessary

for the excursion, which was, in truth, a considerable relief to Mr. Selcroft, who had not the least idea of what they were going to do, or how it was to be done.

Moreover, though sufficiently active in spirit, Mr. Selcroft was constitutionally indolent in other respects, and was extremely well pleased to be spared all the trouble of obtaining information, and of giving orders, and that, too, by a young man who wore such exquisite boots. So entire was the confidence thus produced in the bosom of Mr. Selcroft, that when they reached the door of the hotel, he asked his new acquaintance to join their party at breakfast.

The invitation, however, was declined, the young man replying to it by saying, "Many thanks, but I cannot breakfast with you. . . . There are one or two people whom I must see before we start."

The heart of the tender Louisa seemed to sink within her as she listened to this most unexpected and unpropitious reply. Lucy gave one short, bright glance which seemed to

say, "What does that mean, I wonder?" And Mr. Selcroft, bowing his acquiescence, mounted the stairs to his own sitting-room, not exactly displeased at the refusal, as he recollected that in case his invitation had been accepted, the young man's breakfast would probably have been set down in his bill.

They found Mrs. Selcroft awaiting their arrival with as much impatience as it was in her nature to show on any occasion, for she had been looking at the Lake from the windows, and longed to approach still nearer to it. The news of their projected excursion, therefore, was welcomed by her with great satisfaction, and their breakfast was a gay one, notwithstanding the young man of the mountain was not present at it.

One of the windows of their pleasant sitting-room looked out towards the lake, and the other commanded the space of ground before the entrance on which the various vehicles prepared for excursions are wont to wait for the different parties who have engaged them. Mr. Selcroft happened to pass this

window, which was open, and pleasantly garnished with sweet-scented geraniums, while Henry Harley and another individual were in earnest conversation beneath it.

In looking down upon them as he passed along, the reverend gentleman had not the slightest idea of listening to them, or of acting the spy in any way; but at the moment he was passing away, he was struck with the familiarity of manner with which his new acquaintance appeared to be conversing with a man who was evidently a groom, or at any rate a gentleman's servant of some class or other.

The well appreciated boot-heels bore strong testimony, indeed, to the possibility that the wearer of them might have a servant of his own travelling with him, for in truth such boots ought never to be blacked by any indifferent hand. But this conjecture could not satisfy Mr. Selcroft, who, from behind the shelter of his fragrant blind, discerned a degree of familiarity in the tone of the conversation, which seemed to him perfectly in-

compatible with the relative positions of master and man.

It was very evident, too, that one Henry Harley was making a petition, and not uttering a command. Mr. Selcroft saw the man shake his head, and distinctly heard him say, "Oh, no! I can't indeed."

Thereupon Henry Harley gaily laid his hand upon his shoulder, smiled coaxingly in his face, and very beseechingly pronounced the words, "Do, pray do, Robert! there's a good fellow!"

The man's only reply was another shake of the head, and as he turned away, in order, as it seemed, to get rid of the importunity of his companion, Mr. Selcroft turned away too, unwilling to be detected in the act of spying at them through the geranium bower, but fully convinced that he had already seen and heard enough to prove that, whatever relation the two persons before him might stand in to each other, it certainly was not that of master and servant.

In about a quarter of an hour after this

incident, a modest knock was heard at the door of their apartment, which being answered by "Come in," Henry Harley appeared before them, being come to announce, as he said, that the boat was ready, and waiting for them.

The three ladies all eagerly rose to obey the summons, and received the bearer of it very courteously, nay, even the doubting, uncomfortable Mr. Selcroft himself felt aware that for the moment it was absolutely impossible to resist the force of circumstances, and that as they seemed doomed to pass the day in the society of the young unknown, the wisest course would be to submit to it without resistance, whether he were a serving-man himself, or only a serving-man's particular friend.

Perhaps he did not quite think that he was either; but, putting the very best construction upon what he had witnessed, it appeared evident that the young man whom accident had thrown into their society, was upon terms of intimacy with the menials who hung about the establishment, which certainly did no honour to his taste, and did not promise much for the refinement of his manners.

"Are we to return to dinner?" said Mr. Selcroft, addressing their new acquaintance without a shadow of reserve in his manner. "You seem to know where we are going, Mr. Harley, and therefore may be able to tell us whether it would be wise to take sandwiches or something of that kind with us."

"I have spoken to our good landlady on that subject," he replied, with a sort of confidential nod and smile; "and I have no doubt that we shall find that everything of the kind has been very properly cared for. She is used to the sort of thing, I believe; for there is more than one lovely spot on the banks of this far-famed lake, which might be selected as a banquetting bower by the most fastidious epicure in existence."

Mr. Selcroft bit his lips. It was long since he had felt a pang of such genuine self-reproach. It was evident that the audacious young man had given orders to the landlady to put up a basket for the party, a sort of *ad libitum* permission for swelling the bill, which was equally repugnant to his habits and

his principles. He was inexpressibly provoked at all this, and not the less so because it was his own fault, and heartily did he wish at that moment that he had never been taught to know the difference between a dear boot and a cheap one.

CHAPTER VI.

FORTUNATELY for the enjoyment of the party, Mr. Selcroft was a man who could retain his usual placidity of countenance and manner, even when vexed in spirit; so the pleasure of their very delightful excursion was in no degree injured by the latent doubts and fears which his anxious observations had generated.

A thousand different points of our lovely earth might easily be enumerated as the favourite scenes where landscape lovers delight to linger, and which have, therefore, been made the banqueting-halls of many who, for

the time being, felt themselves to be the very happiest of the human race; but among them all it would be difficult to find one combining more elements of beauty, and more inducements to enjoyment, than the favourite nooks and corners afforded by Killarney's lovely lake and its immediate neighbourhood.

The business of placing themselves in the boat, with all that elaborate attention to the arrangement of cloaks and shawls, which well-behaved husbands, fathers, brothers, and adorers delight to show, was just completed, and the boatman, who had remained on the pier to prevent the boat from escaping till all was finished, had just thrown the rope from him, and jumped after it, when a young man, having greatly the air and costume of a gentleman's groom, was seen running at full speed towards the place of embarkation, and Henry Harley having imperatively uttered the word "stop!" the boat was pushed back and had again nearly touched the pier, when by an active spring the new comer placed himself without further ceremony on board.

Mr. Selcroft immediately recognized in this addition to their party, the young man with whom he had seen Harley in such earnest conversation from the window of the hotel. Mr. Harley evidently recognised him also, for again he familiarly placed his hand upon the young man's shoulder, and uttered a few words to him in a low voice, but with a look and manner which showed that he was greatly pleased at seeing him.

This unexpected addition to the company did not come empty-handed, for he carried what seemed to be a small bag made of green baise, upon which Henry laid his hand while speaking to its owner, as if to examine its contents, and having moreover peeped within its folds, he spoke a few more whispered words to the young man with a countenance perfectly radiant with the cordiality of the welcome with which he pointed to a snug seat in the bow of the boat.

"So the dear footman-friend is to share the excursion it seems, but I presume some favourable opportunity is to be waited for

before he is introduced to our acquaintance;" such were the ruffled thoughts of Mr. Selcroft, and while he settled himself in his place, and determined for the time being to devote his attention to the beauties of nature, and to forget, if possible, all distinctions of rank, he privately vowed a little vow that he would never again, at least not till both his daughters were married, permit any circumstances whatever to beguile him into accepting the companionship of a stranger.

The rest of the party seemed to be, and really were, in a state of great enjoyment. Mrs. Selcroft was never by any chance so completely at her ease, and therefore so completely comfortable, as when she might indulge in a silent contemplation of what was beautiful, unless indeed she had the especial good fortune to have her daughter Lucy really, truly, and completely tête-à-tête, to share the pleasure with her.

This certainly was not the case now; nevertheless Mrs. Selcroft had very little interruption to her enjoyment, for Mr. Selcroft was in

no humour to interrupt her contemplatious. Louisa saw nothing and nobody but Mr. Harley, and Mr. Harley saw nothing and nobody but Louisa; whereas Lucy was evidently amusing herself with everything and everybody within her reach.

And certainly something was going on that appeared to amuse her exceedingly. Any one who had been sufficiently at leisure to watch her, could not have failed to see that her father, in particular, seemed to afford her great entertainment. But nobody *was* at leisure to watch her, so she went on silently, but very happily, dividing her time between marking the rapidly increasing devotion of Henry to Louisa, and of Louisa to Henry, together with her poor papa's constantly increasing uneasiness thereat, and her mother's quiet enjoyment of their smooth voyage, and of all the lovely objects which successively presented themselves to her view.

And ere long Lucy herself, notwithstanding her facility in comprehending the *asides* of every drama enacted in her presence, and her

great enjoyment in the occupation, began to forget everything save the indescribable beauty of the scenes through which she was passing. The first pushing forth upon the lake was beautiful, with Ross Island on one side, and Innesfallen Island on the other; and Toomies Mountain, in its rich mantle of forest before them, and its grim, naked, purple brother hanging over the Gap of Dunlo; and the towering rocks of Gillicuddy, with the towering Carran Tual, in the midst; all this was beautiful, and so was O'Sullivan's Waterfall, where they landed for a few minutes, and where Henry Harley had the supreme felicity of supporting the faltering steps of Louisa up and down some very rude steps; all this was beautiful, and both Lucy and her mother enjoyed it all; but nevertheless it was only the mother, long ago converted into a passive looker-on by finding that her opinions on all subjects were too moderate to be of any avail, it was only quiet, comfortable, Mrs. Selcroft, who gave herself entirely to the gentle enjoyment of the gliding movement, and the sunshine,

and the sweet breeze, and the glorious scenery.

Lucy was still divided between all this, and the, to her, ever-interesting occupation of finding that her dear darling papa was blundering precisely on some point whereon he prided himself upon being particularly discerning.

She really loved him very affectionately; in fact, all the family loved one another very affectionately; nevertheless there were very few points on which they all, or even any two of them, thought alike. If this ever happened at all, it was between Mrs. Selcroft and Lucy; but even then, there were feelings in each so constitutionally dissimilar as to interfere a good deal with their perfect sympathy. This arose, in a great measure, from Mrs. Selcroft's simple and faithful conception of her duties as a wife. The "love, honour, and obey," were interpreted literally by her, and adhered to resolutely. The "love" and "obey" would have been easy enough, for she was affectionate and gentle; but she would have felt it easier to honour her husband, had his notions been as

true as her own. However, somehow or other, she did manage to honour him, the difficulties of the task being got over by means of her exceedingly modest opinion of herself, which made her believe that she was of so much humbler a rank in the scale of creation, that even if the marriage service had been less explicit on the point, she would have felt that honour must be due to one so much her superior.

This was very excellent, and very amiable, and yet it was this that formed the stumbling-block which came in the way to prevent any perfect sympathy between the mother and her eldest daughter.

Lucy, too, loved her father; but she never for a moment attempted to delude herself into the belief that she could honour him as sincerely as she honoured her mother. She knew that he had no independence of character, very little moral courage, and still less simple, genuine truth. But still she loved him dearly, and pleaded his cause to her own heart so effectually as almost to force her

judgment to acquit him of everything worse than weakness.

"Poor dear papa! he does try to be so very good about the things that he fancies right! Though I know perfectly well that it is a horrible bore to him. But it is a shame to laugh at him about it, because he must, I suppose, do it all from a sense of duty. And yet mama is the finer creature by far!"

Such, and such like, were her meditations respecting him. But though her admiration of her mother was great, her sympathy was imperfect, because she could not prevent herself from blaming a little, and laughing a great deal upon many occasions, when the strictly disciplined mind of her mother would have shrunk from doing either.

And fondly did Mrs. Selcroft and Lucy love the beautiful Louisa, and fondly did she love them in return; but it must ever be vain to look for real sympathy between persons of large and persons of small intellectual capacity.

It has been said already, and quite truly,

that Mr. Selcroft himself was affectionately attached to his wife and daughters, but with neither of them could he enjoy very perfect sympathy, because his whole existence was devoted to the task of appearing to them, as well as to every body else, something rather different from what he really was.

And as for Louisa, the fair, the sylph-like, the delicate Louisa, she was too essentially, too wholly and solely a beauty, for any space to be left within the compass of her being, for any other characteristic to develop itself. Yet at this moment she had as nearly forgotten her own beauty as it was possible she should ever do; for so delightful did she find the companionship, or rather the admiration, of Henry, that she only remembered it as the means by which she hoped to bind him to her for ever.

Her varying complexion, and the unspeakable softness of her beautiful eyes, as from time to time she ventured to raise them to his, as she replied to the enthusiastic sallies in which he pointed out to her the varied loveli-

ness of the scenes through which they were passing, convinced him that his first impression, though received in the midst of storm, and tempest, of disordered drapery, and dishevelled curls, was a very correct one, and that his new acquaintance was beyond all comparison the most beautiful girl he had ever seen; but he was far from suspecting the extreme susceptibility of her heart; he feared that she was painfully shy, but never for an instant imagined that he had already won that poor, fluttering, silly little heart, and that it was his, not only now, but for ever.

The delightful little voyage had now brought the party to the foot of the Eagle's Nest, and here the boat paused for a moment, and the young man whose familiarity with Henry Harley had produced so painful an effect on Mr. Selcroft, suddenly rose, and having exchanged a short, but evidently very friendly, colloquy with the young gentleman, suddenly sprung from the boat, and disappeared among the rushes and bushes on the bank.

As soon as he was gone, the boatman made

a stroke or two with their oars, and having thereby placed the boat in shade, placed themselves and their oars in an attitude of rest, and seemed to be awaiting his return.

Mr. Selcroft felt what transatlantic worthies call "*first-rate disgusted.*" Here they were, then, stopped short in the midst of their picturesque course, to await the leisure of their pedestrian friend's associate, till his curiosity might be satisfied by this solitary and very unaccountable descent upon terra firma.

"Are we not to go on, sir?" said he, addressing Mr. Harley, with more abruptness than courtesy.

"Wait one moment, sir," replied the young man, with a smile of perfect good-humour, "I will promise that you shall be rewarded for your patience."

"He has sent his dear friend for a bunch of blackberries, I presume," was the mental soliloquy of the vexed Mr. Selcroft.

But scarcely had he performed the little peevish movement by which he settled himself into an attitude which was intended to express

the most constrained, but most resolute patience, when the notes of a bugle, by no means unskilfully played, caused the delighted ladies to start with surprise and pleasure. And oh! how beautiful was the countenance, how charming the attitude of Louisa, as she listened!

A long drawn breath from each, as the strain ended, seemed all they had power to utter in that moment of pleasurable surprise, and ere they could sufficiently recover themselves to make a remark, or ask a question, the same sweet notes stole upon them again; but now it was from a distance, and another moment of fascinated attention brought the conviction that this delicious repetition was the effect of a marvellously perfect echo.

The soft low voice of Louisa was heard to murmur the words, "Delicious! oh, too delicious!"

Whereupon Mr. Harley sprung forward to the head of the boat, and converting his hands into a speaking-trumpet, cried aloud, "Encore! Again, Saunders, again!" And then, reseating

himself, he fell to such perusal of the sweet face at his side, as the strain was repeated, as would have well repaid him had he waded breast high to the shore in order to obtain it.

Whether it be from the scene, or the sound, or the unexpected manner in which it comes upon one, or from the mysterious perfection of that echo, "long drawn out," that appears sweeter still than the instrument it mimics —whatever be the cause, the fact is certain, that no one can listen to a strain on that spot, with its seemingly miraculous repeat from the distant air, without delight.

Louisa, who was in a state of mind that made her whole frame vibrate to every sentimental emotion, unconsciously permitted two drops, more precious in the eyes of Henry than orient pearls, to steal from her beautiful eyes as she turned them upwards with a sort of religious reverence towards the mystical rock whence the sounds seemed to come. These tears acted as a *coup de grace* upon the heart of the young man. . . . . All his struggles were over! He only wanted *that;* he only

wanted to be sure that the fair soul was worthy of the shrine that contained it, in order to be very nearly as much in love as the beauteous girl herself. . . . . And what finer, more delicate, more convincing proof could he wish for? Could one so tremblingly alive to the most refined emotions, be deficient in any of those higher and highest attributes of our intellectual nature without which (as he was ready to avow) his heart could never be won?

"No! beauty, merely personal beauty, could never make me feel as I feel now!" he mentally exclaimed, and from that moment he candidly confessed to his own heart that he *was* passionately in love.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. SELCROFT, though far from being an ill-tempered man, was decidedly at that moment not in good humour, yet nevertheless he could not altogether resist the effect which had thrown all the rest of his party into a state approaching ecstacy, nor could he refrain from giving Lucy a short, but expressive glance, and exclaiming in an audible whisper, "Beautiful! very beautiful!"

But all his vexatious suspicions returned upon him in full force the moment after, when he saw the obnoxious "Saunders" return to

the boat, and heard him addressed by the new acquaintance of his family with the words, "Capital, Saunders! Capital, my good fellow!" in a tone of the most intimate and friendly familiarity. The discovery that the said Saunders was a very respectable performer on the bugle in no degree lessened his mortification at this close companionship, for neither was the conviction of his being a domestic servant in any degree lessened thereby.

But not even the paternally anxious temperament of Mr. Selcroft could withstand the absorbing beauty of the scenes that soon opened upon them, and for a short interval he positively forgot that an individual, apparently as intimate with some gentleman's groom as if he had been his brother, was making downright love to his beautiful daughter Louisa, to whose splendid marriage with some second Mr. Smithers he had long been looking forward as a source of advancement and advantage to the whole family.

This oblivion, however, was not of very long duration, but while it lasted, it was complete;

and when they landed upon Denis Island, and took possession of that matchless bench from which the delighted gaze of so many hundreds of tourists* have looked on land and water, on shrub and tree, with such deep delight, the reverend Mr. Selcroft no longer remembered that he was in the "valley of the shadow of death," and for the moment was only conscious of the exceeding happiness of being born into a world of such enchanting beauty.

A very delightful half-hour was devoted to this spot, and to the examination of the picturesque broken bridge that is visible from it, and then they re-embarked and rowed back to Glena Bay, where they landed, in order, as Mr. Harley told them, to see Lady Kenmare's pretty cottage, as well as to wander a little among her ladyship's beautiful shrubs, and even to climb, if the path proved not too rude, up a portion, at least, of O'Glena's forest-covered mountain.

Having left the boat, the Selcroft family

* Sir Walter Scott among the rest, if local records fable not.

stood for a few moments, like everybody else who lands there, entranced in the fairy beauty of the spot. The air of simple luxury, if two such words may be brought together, displayed in the cottage villa, the dark majesty of the O'Glena mountain by which it is sheltered, the lovely shrubs scattered profusely in every direction, and showing, by their luxuriant growth, that they were at home there, together with the silvery vein across the matchless lake upon the bosom of which the spirit-soothing voyage has been made, altogether produces an effect, the charm of which must reach every heart.

Yet, strange as it may seem, Henry Harley did not share these delightful moments with the beautiful Louisa; on the contrary, he seemed, as Mr. Selcroft observed to Lucy, so completely engrossed by the conversation of his friend, the musical groom, as apparently to have forgotten every one else. This oblivion, however, did not last long; but when Henry rejoined them, the manner in which he instantly offered his arm to Louisa, and led her off into what was evidently a very narrow

mountain path, was still more disagreeable to the anxious father, than the apparent neglect had been. He uttered a sound that was something between a grunt and a groan, but said nothing; offering his arms in gloomy silence to his wife and eldest daughter, and leading them forward in the direction which the very lover-like pair had taken, with feelings but little in unison with the delicious tranquillity of the scene.

Having proceeded in this manner for some minutes, Mrs. Selcroft gently entreated a halt. "The path is so steep, and you walk so very fast, my dear Selcroft," said she, "that I shall beg you and Lucy to go on without me. I will wait for your return on that comfortable-looking bench, and you need have no fears lest I should not enjoy myself sufficiently."

Both father and daughter uttered something kind about not liking to leave her alone, but were silenced by her saying in reply,—

"I had rather that you followed Louisa, than that you remained with me."

Mr. Selcroft's rejoinder to this was an ex-

pressive nod, and that of Lucy an equally expressive smile; and then they silently proceeded, arm-in-arm, to ascend the mountain-path. But their silence did not last long, though the path did.

"I am greatly afraid, Lucy," said Mr. Selcroft, gravely, "that we have had the great ill luck of falling into something terribly like intimacy with a person by no means worthy of it. And yet I scarcely know how to reproach myself for it, for it has been altogether involuntary on my part."

"Do not be uneasy, papa," replied Lucy; "I do not think you have any reason to reproach yourself."

"Reproach myself?—No, my dear, I have said already that I do not reproach myself. But sharp-sighted as you are, Lucy, you cannot but see that this new acquaintance is not quite a desirable one."

"As how, papa?" said Lucy, innocently. "Because you think that there may be danger of poor Louisa's thinking him too agreeable?"

"There certainly may be danger of that

too, my dear child, yet that is not precisely what I mean, either. Are you not aware, Lucy, that there are other reasons for the feeling I have expressed? Other reasons, I mean, for thinking the acquaintance objectionable?"

"No, papa!" replied Lucy, gaily, and with all the childish innocence of fourteen. "I don't see any other reason."

"I am surprised to hear you say so, Lucy; and if you speak seriously, I can assure you that on the present occasion, at least, you have no great reason to boast of the sagacity on which you are sometimes inclined to pride yourself," rejoined her father, very gravely.

"I am sure, papa, that if I pride myself upon that, or upon any thing else, I am very sorry for it, because it is so wicked to be proud of anything. But still I can't think there is any reason to be frightened about this young gentleman," said Lucy.

"*Gentleman?*" returned her father. "And pray what right have you to call him a gentleman?"

"Perhaps I have no right to call him any thing," she replied. "We have certainly no authority but his own for believing that his name is Harley. But yet I do believe it."

"His having a card with that name printed upon it is evidence, though not proof," said Mr. Selcroft. "But does the obvious intimacy that exists between him and the young man who blew the bugle, in any degree justify your giving him the appellation of gentleman? Now, my dear, you shall hear my opinion upon the subject . . . . and it is this. I firmly believe that bugle-player to be neither more nor less than a domestic servant."

"I think so too, papa," replied Lucy.

"Then you must be jesting, Lucy, in saying that you believe the other to be a gentleman. And considering that your sister Louisa has walked off with him in so very familiar a style, I really cannot think it a subject for jesting."

"I am not jesting," returned Lucy, very earnestly;" "and I am quite aware that it is not a subject for jesting, for I am very sure

indeed, papa, that Mr. Harley and Louisa are falling in love with each other. But my notion about that man who played the bugle, and whom Mr. Harley called Saunders, is very different from yours, papa."

"And pray what may your notion be, Miss Lucy? Perhaps you may think it right to fall in love with him yourself."

"No, papa," she replied, with perfect good humour, "I should not think that right at all, because there is one part of your opinion about him that I quite agree with; I think as you do, that he is a servant, only I think into the bargain that——"

"That what, Miss Lucy? That Mr. Saunders may be a very fitting friend for your sister's lover, though not precisely a fitting lover for yourself? Is that what you mean?" said he.

"No, papa. What I mean is, that I think Mr. Harley is his master," she replied.

Mr. Selcroft stared at her, and remained silent for a moment. "What has put that into your head, I wonder?" he said at last,

and then added, without waiting for her reply, "If that were possible, Lucy, it certainly would make a very great difference, of course, you know. But you forget, my dear child, the way in which we first saw him, carrying his own strange wardrobe strapped upon his back. Pray, how do you account for that? Do you imagine that if this young man were his servant, he would have left him to amuse himself by practising upon the bugle, instead of taking him with him to carry it?"

"*Taking him with him*, papa! There it is, you see. My notion is, that Mr. Henry Harley, who I am quite sure is a very romantic young gentleman, would greatly prefer carrying a clean shirt or two himself, to the being accompanied by any servant in the world amidst such mountains and such valleys as we saw yesterday."

"A very remarkable idea that, Lucy," exclaimed Mr. Selcroft, "very remarkable, indeed, and very much like one of your clever hits, my dear, I must say. If that were the

case it certainly would make a great difference—a very material difference. If that were the case, you know, Lucy, it is very likely that this Mr. Harley is the very identical young gentleman whom the waiter said had his own horses here. Don't you think it possible?"

"Yes, papa, very possible," replied Lucy.

"If so, my taking this *tête-à-tête* walk with you is perfectly providential, Lucy, and it is our bounden duty to be grateful for the same! And above all, my dear child, be very careful, if you should prove right in this, not to pride yourself upon your own sagacity . . . . If you *are* right, Lucy, be very sure that it is the special interference of providence, and to doubt this would be the height of impiety! . . . . But tell me, my dear, what was it first put it into your head that the bugle-player was our new friend's servant?"

Lucy felt that in order to be both obedient and consistent, she ought to have replied that "it was borne in upon her mind;" but though she felt the temptation, she did not yield to

it, but gravely replied, that she believed it was something in Mr. Harley's voice and general manner which caused her to think that it was more likely he should be Mr. Saunders' master than his companion and friend.

"Providential!" repeated Mr. Selcroft, fervently clasping his hands, "clearly providential!"

"Now, then, papa, will you let me rest upon this fallen tree for one little minute?" . . . . And her father releasing her arm, she sat down and took off her bonnet, which was a great relief, for the weather was warm, the hill steep, and the pace at which his paternal anxiety had caused Mr. Selcroft to walk, in the hope of overtaking Louisa, rather too rapid for enjoyment.

But the worthy parent now yielded himself without scruple to the suggestion of his eldest daughter, and seating himself beside her, turned his heated brow to meet the breeze, and evidently enjoyed the repose as much as she did.

"And now there is another thing you must

tell me, Lucy," he resumed, with more than usual gaicty of manner. "What was it put it into that busy little head of yours, that these two young people who have scampered on before us, are falling in love with each other, as you call it ?"

"One reason was because they did scamper on so, papa," she replied. "Just look down at the steepness of the path we have come up, and then just observe how completely they are out of sight above our heads . . . Nothing but falling in love, I should think, could have made them so completely unconscious of the fatigue of climbing such a mountain in the month of July."

"There is something in that, certainly," said her father, with a smile, which made him look about ten years younger than he had done when he set off to follow his beautiful Louisa.

"But, hark ! somebody is calling to us, I think . . . . And the sound comes in that direction," pointing to the right; "but not exactly above us."

Another call from the quarter he had

indicated was then distinctly heard, and Lucy said, "They are calling to us, papa! Had you not better answer them?"

That Mr. Selcroft approved the suggestion was made evident by his immediately uttering, in a very joyous, friendly tone of voice, "Holla, there! holla!"

"Come on! This way!" was responded in the like amiable manner, and in about three minutes the two parties had joined.

"I know not how we managed to lose each other so completely," said Mr. Harley, "but I suppose the mazes of this tangled wood must account for it. We are now within a few minutes' walk of O'Sullivan's Waterfall, and I am sure you will think it worth looking at."

Mr. Selcroft was at that moment in a mood to think everything worth looking at which Mr. Henry Harley wished to show him, and the whole party proceeded, as nearly together as the rough character of the ground would permit, to the point whence this pretty little cataract is seen to the greatest advantage;

and on this spot they all sat down together, and if the young man had not been too much occupied by his own feelings to have any leisure to speculate upon those of others, he might have been puzzled to account for the very evident change which had taken place in the countenance, voice, and general demeanour of Mr. Selcroft since he last parted from him.

But Louisa was by his side—Louisa, with her little hands clasped in ecstasy, and her eloquent eyes now fixed on the waterfall and its wild banks, and now turned to his, that she might read there the sympathy which it was so delightful to witness and to feel—Louisa was close beside him, and he was very nearly unconscious of everything else.

But, perhaps, no individual of the party, though it was certainly a very happy one, enjoyed the whole thing more completely than Lucy. Though nobody talked openly and vulgarly about it, in some way or other it was pretty well known to all the Selcroft family, the pretty Louisa herself included,

that a good marriage for her—just such a marriage as Aunt Smithers had made—was an event looked to, and wished for, with no trifling anxiety. They did not talk vulgarly, either, about their poverty, but they all and each knew very well that they all and each wanted more money than they had, and though the expression most in use among them was that they trusted to Providence for everything, they nevertheless betrayed a sort of habitual anxiety about Louisa, and the admiration her beauty excited, which proved that they trusted a little to her, too. But, in addition to this, they all really loved her very fondly, and as to Lucy, her love for her seemed made up of a multitude of various affections, which altogether, perhaps, amounted to a more complete devotion than even that of her parents. She loved her as an only sister, as a faithful friend, as a pet to play with and caress, and the very defects of the gentle beauty's character only rendered her dearer to the stronger mind of Lucy, who, while she managed her in most matters as

easily as if she had been a baby, felt that there was confidence, as well as weakness, in the manner in which she suffered herself to be led, and while love cast out all fear on one side, it cast out everything like contempt on the other.

The grand affair of disposing of Louisa in marriage had already caused a good deal of anxiety to Lucy, in more ways than one; for, sometimes, she had been desperately frightened lest her gentle darling should be induced to accept some rich man that she did not like, and, at others, she had suffered from an equally vehement paroxysm of alarm lest she should fix her fancy upon some poor man that she did.

Nor were such fears by any means vain fears; for Louisa was quite capable of doing either, being of a nature greatly too weak and flexible to make any long or efficient resistance to any measure urged resolutely and perseveringly upon her, and greatly too tender-hearted not to give very reasonable ground to fear that she might be liable to

fall in love with anybody who was so amiable as to fall in love with her, whether he were as rich as Uncle Smithers, or as poor as papa's curate, provided only that he were young, well-looking, and tolerably agreeable.

Such being the state of the case, it is easy enough to understand why Lucy Selcroft was so much on the alert upon the appearance of such an individual as Mr. Henry Harley upon the scene, and what the feelings had been which had so spurred her talents of observation as to enable her thus brilliantly to outrun her father in the race of discernment and conjecture.

This superiority, however, did not arise from any deficiency of anxiety on the part of the father, but from Lucy's being a woman, whereas he was only a man; and where is the man to be found who in such a case can hope to compete successfully with the quick eye, quick intelligence, and quick inference of a woman?

And now Lucy very naturally felt proud,

as well as happy, at perceiving that her convictions respecting the young stranger's position in life to which her mother-wit had brought her, were at length shared by her less acute and more suspicious papa.

CHAPTER VIII.

From this point of the excursion everything went on as smoothly, as gaily, as enchantingly as the heart of love and youth could desire. Mr. Selcroft led the way, with his happy daughter, Lucy, on his arm, in returning to the spot where they had left his tranquil-spirited wife; but the well-behaved, though still happier Louisa, did not suffer her companion to detain her very far behind, and there was only just time enough for Mrs. Selcroft to become aware that her husband had returned to her in much better health and spirits than

when he left her, before the whole party now assembled in front of the seat she occupied, and ready to escort her to the pretty little rustic banquetting-house which the kindly feelings of the noble proprietors of the paradise permit all felicity-hunters to use for their feastings at Glena.

Lucy could not resist the temptation of giving her father one little triumphant smile on perceiving the heretofore obnoxious Saunders busily employed in giving a few last touches to the pretty banquet which awaited them, but though its saucy meaning was perfectly well understood, it received only a playful shrug, and a gay shake of the head by way of reproof. Had the gay spirits, and happy hopes of Mr. Selcroft been still at a lower ebb, he would infallibly have taken alarm at the costly style of the repast, and have conceived some very disagreeable ideas as to the probability of his being expected to pay at least a portion of it. But now he "had no such stuff in his thoughts;" the light which the bright genius of his daughter Lucy had let in upon him fully sufficed to make

him perceive that all that would be required of him was that he should say grace, and eat as much as he liked, without making himself troublesome or obtrusive in any way; and this he did, accepting, perhaps unconsciously, Rousseau's version of the Christian law, "*Faites votre bien, avec le moindre mal d'autrui.*" That is to say, he made an excellent repast, and conversed in so lively a manner with his wife and his eldest daughter (having happened to place himself between them) as to interrupt, in the very least possible degree, the low-murmured colloquy which was going on between Mr. Harley and the youngest.

All this was very delightful; but all things must fade, the brightest still the fleetest, and now these happiest moments of the fair Louisa's life were waning; for the sun was looking gloriously red in the west, and Saunders knew exactly how long it took to pull across the lake, plus the number of minutes necessary for packing the pic-nicing elegances of the Victoria Hotel; and so he very bravely came, napkin in hand, behind the shoulder of his

master—for Henry Harley really was his master—and whispered in his ear: "We shall have hardly light left, sir, to reach the landing."

Henry Harley was upon the whole a very kind and indulgent master, but now he turned round sharply, and with a look that was almost fiercely angry, to chide the unwelcome counsellor, and he might have spoken perhaps as fiercely as he looked, had he not at the moment happened to remember how well the poor fellow had behaved in the affair of awakening the echo under the Eagle's Nest. For the worthy Saunders was but a shy amateur performer, and knew just enough of the gay science to feel that it ought not to be treated with any impertinent freedoms; it had been therefore sorely against his inclination that he had consented to supply the place of the established bugle-player, who was no where to be found. Harley was quite aware of this, and he remembered it in time to convert his frown into a smile, or something like it, as he replied, "I believe you are right, Saunders.

We will be off as soon as you can collect your things, and stow them in the boat.

"You hear what he says, my dear sir," added Harley, turning to Mr. Selcroft; "I am afraid that in common prudence we are bound to listen to him, and yet there is something absolutely tragic in turning away from such a scene as this while the sun is still above the horizon. Yes—tragic, positively tragic!"

He turned his eyes towards Louisa as he passionately uttered this rhapsody, but instead of the smile he expected, he met a sweet sad look from an almost tearful eye, and instantly felt that what he had uttered gaily, she received pathetically.

It would not be very easy to describe precisely the effect produced by this.

Had it happened from the very fairest fair that he had ever before encountered in the whole course of his life, he would certainly have been tempted to laugh at it, and at her. But from Louisa Selcroft!—Could she be judged by the same standard that might be applied to any one else? Was she not too divinely

lovely, too angelically innocent, to be submitted to such a test? And the rapid answer to this rapid thought was breathed mentally in a most fervent "No!" and "YES!"

And then the business of departure commenced, and one short sweet little stroll more across the lovely lawn, a few farewell looks thrown upwards from the finest eyes in the world, to the lofty mountain which sheltered it, and one deep tender sigh from a bosom that rivalled that of the swan's in whiteness; all this having been achieved, the party descended to the boat where the active and efficient Saunders was already at his post, everything within his department being admirably well cared for and arranged.

Had not the moon, some two days past her prime, given her ever lovely, though already waning light to assist them, the forebodings of the prudent Mr. Saunders would have been very literally fulfilled; for it was by the light of the moon, and of the moon alone, that they at length reached their comfortable hotel.

The party paused for a moment on the

threshold of the building. Mrs. Selcroft looked at the moon, declared it was indescribably lovely, but declared also that she was so exceedingly fatigued that she must perforce wish them all good night, and retire to rest.

The sigh with which Louisa replied to this, was just not quite inaudible; but even this could not prevent the very perfectly gentlemanlike Henry Harley from uttering his farewell salutation also. He was going, he said, to take one of his long moonlight rambles, and should probably not return to the hotel till they were all sunk in deep repose.

"Dream of Glena!" he said, addressing himself in a little *sotto voce* to Louisa. "I shall dream of it whether sleeping or waking!"

And having said this in a manner that was intelligible at least to one, he darted away and soon placed an impenetrable barrier of distance and of shadow between them.

Almost any one may imagine pretty accurately the train of thought into which Louisa Selcroft fell after his departure. It is easy enough to divine how freely, to herself at least,

she acknowledged that the events of that day had decided the destiny of her life!

How far HIS destiny might be affected by it, she dared not even venture to imagine. Hope whispered a multitude of flattering tales, to all of which, with the prettiest lack of wisdom in the world, she pretended to turn a deaf ear; but the warm cheek and the throbbing bosom bore witness that, whatever the conduct of Henry Harley had been during the happy hours of that eventful day, it had not been such as to leave her in possession of as much tranquillity of mind and ease of heart as she had enjoyed before he crossed her path.

This state of mind is so very ordinary a result of one of those parties of pleasure which bring youths and damsels together with every imaginable temptation and convenience for falling in love, that the merest novice in such matters may very easily guess how it fared with poor pretty Louisa, without any assistance of mine.

But its effect upon Henry was not altogether so obvious. That he too had fallen vehe-

mently in love, is quite certain, but there were out-of-the-way depths and corners in his character which were not so easily reached and pervaded by any sentiment as was the whole heart and soul of his fair companion.

It was with a rapid step and a throbbing pulse that he now separated himself from the beautiful girl who had thus suddenly inspired him with a fit of the passion called love, and as he moved off, a sort of broad general conviction rested on his mind that it was absolutely necessary to his happiness that he should become her husband with as little delay as possible.

If Louisa could have been made acquainted with all that was passing in his mind as he thus strode away from her; could she have known all the passionate thoughts which caused his heart to beat as again and again he murmured her name to the breeze, she would not only have been perfectly satisfied, but she would have almost denied the possibility that Heaven itself could make her more so.

But could Lucy in like manner have been

made to read what was passing in his mind, she might have been less completely contented thereby. She would have seen an immensity of tender love, and would have greatly delighted to find it there; but she would have liked this love better still had it not so often told itself that it was irresistible. And she would have preferred his not reiterating to himself the sort of petulant declaration that nothing on earth could be so contemptible, so childishly absurd, as for a man to persuade himself that the woman he married ought to be a thing made on purpose for him;—that beautiful, heavenly beautiful, as tenderness was, she must not be an atom too tender; and that a single sigh *de trop* might be cause sufficient to justify the resigning all the sweetest hopes and fondest wishes that could warm the heart of man, lest, forsooth, he might perchance at some moment find a tender tear where he looked for a playful smile! Lucy might not have liked his being so angry with himself for something or other that he had taken into his head, and wished to get out of it.

But whatever Lucy might think of it, no man could show more plainly legible signs of being tremendously in love than Henry Harley did upon the present occasion. One minute he walked as fast as his active limbs could carry him; and the next as slowly as it was well possible to move, if he moved at all. Now he murmured her name in accents as tender as those of the nightingale when she answers to the call of her mate; and anon his closed lips and firm-set teeth bore witness to an intensity of purpose which was to baffle and defy every species of opposition, let it come from what quarter it might.

He had borrowed at least two moon-lit hours from the night for the purpose of indulging himself in these amatory exercises, before it ever occurred to him that he had better turn round, walk home again, and go to bed; and even when this idea did at length suggest itself, it was not listened to graciously; for instead of yielding to it at once, which he certainly would have done had he been in a more rational frame of mind, he sprung over a stile

by the road-side, and began following a path which, far from leading to the Victoria Hotel, conducted him to the side of a beautiful little waterfall, with which he was well acquainted.

Beside this waterfall he sat himself down very deliberately, though he had already heard the Killarney clock strike twelve, in the hope that the monotone sweetness of its murmuring, to which he had often listened with delight, might soothe the overwrought excitement which was beginning to make him feel feverish and ill at ease.

The experiment answered better than he expected, or perhaps than he intended it should do . . . . For it recalled to him the image of the one only very poor and very dear relative that fate had left him ; it recalled to him, by some link of memory, the thought of his sister Fanny, which, greatly contrary to custom, had not yet entered his head since the eventful moment in which he had first beheld Louisa Selcroft.

His sister Fanny was five years his senior, but nevertheless the affection between them

was perhaps as perfect as it was possible for human affection to be. Their love was made up of all that could make attachment a source of lasting happiness; it was warm, tender, and enduring; it was founded on mutual admiration and mutual esteem, and had that closer cement still, which may be called genuine *liking*, or in loftier language sympathy, and without which not all the love in the world, let it be of what species it may, can be perfect.

"Will Fanny like her?" was the question that suddenly suggested itself to Henry, as the thought of his sister recurred to him; and this mental question was accompanied by a strange tingling of the cheeks, of which he was only so far conscious as to make him feel that the question was a very important one.

The next movement, however, was a paroxysm of very noble indignation against himself for doubting it. "How can she help liking her?" he murmured, in a tone of perfect disgust at his own folly and want of confidence. "How can such an admirable being

as Fanny fail to like and love such an angel as Louisa? . . . . Of course she will like her."

And having satisfied his lover-conscience by pronouncing this loud enough for all the wood and water nymphs of the region to hear him, he became more composed, and permitted himself to think quietly of his sister Fanny, without fancying that by doing so he was false to his tender love.

But the clock of Killarney had struck one before he had disentangled himself from a long rambling sort of disquisition upon the peculiarities of his sister Fanny's intellectual faculties. He had never amused himself in this way before. Henry Harley was only twenty-three years old, and at this age, five years of seniority in a sister tends to check any very critical examination of her abilities, especially if, as in the present case, this elder sister happens to be a woman of acknowledged talent. But now, unfortunately for the beautiful Louisa, he took it into his head not only to meditate upon the brilliant faculties of his

sister Fanny, but upon their peculiar nature. Fanny Harley was good, kind, charitable, and affectionate; but she was keenly observant, nevertheless, and though no human being could be less likely to oppress a fellow-creature by exhibiting superiority of any kind, it was not in her power to remain insensible to folly.

This was a real misfortune to her, for this unlucky keenness of perception often forced her to be in some sort a hypocrite, or else to betray distaste and unkind avoidance towards persons who, as she often said and often thought, might deserve a higher place than herself in the scale of morally responsible beings, yet in whose society she was conscious of no feeling more amiable than *ennui*. But her brother Henry judged her more leniently than she judged herself, for he saw no sin in being tired by what was tiresome; but once and again his conscious cheeks rose tingled, as he asked himself during the profound solitude of that midnight meditation, whether Louisa Selcroft and Fanny Harley were likely to love each other as sisters?

The train of thoughts which chased each other through his brain as he half sat and half lay in the moonshine beside that cataract, varied strangely in their complexion as they passed along. Sometimes in the midst of all his lover-like pathos and tender sentiment, he laughed as he thought of Fanny's mode of contemplating all ultra-demonstrations of excessive sensibility, and then, ere his white teeth had ceased to gleam in the moonbeams, he was slapping his brow with his open palm in all the vehemence of self-reproach for the base ingratitude which made him smile at the tenderness of which he was himself the object.

And thus he went on, sometimes resigning himself wholly to the "sweet passion of love," and sometimes reluctantly confessing to his heart that not even Louisa herself, not even Louisa with all her matchless beauty and all her touching tenderness, could atone to him for anything like annoyance on the part of his sister, and still less perhaps for anything like contempt for the choice he had made.

After he had confessed this very distressing

truth to his heart, he began to feel both sleepy and cold. It was in truth a miserably prosaic termination to all the poetical ecstacy of the day, and he felt angry, not only with himself, but with his distant and unconscious sister also, for having come across so beautiful a vision, and extinguished it with the heavy touch of common sense.

Fortunately for his tranquillity at the moment, however, his fatigue, both of body and mind, had so effectually crushed all vanity, as well as all romance within him, that as he walked home to the hotel, he never once reproached himself with the mischief he might have been doing to the young lady's peace of mind, the end of every reflection as he trudged along being, "The truth is, that I am not old enough as yet to think of marriage; —this young stranger is a most beautiful creature, certainly, but that is no reason that I should risk her happiness and my own too, not to mention the probable misery to poor Fanny, by running blindfold into a connexion of which the only certain feature is its dura-

bility. I must think longer about it before I take so important, so irrevocable a step."

And in this subdued and reasonable mood he re-entered the Victoria Hotel at about two o'clock in the morning, by the aid of the watchful and not a little frightened Saunders, but not till he was sufficiently exhausted, both in body and mind, to cause him to drop into a profound sleep the moment he laid his head upon the pillow.

CHAPTER IX.

It was still an hour or two before there was any chance of his waking, when Mr. Selcroft, who on that morning rose as much before his usual time, as Henry Harley slept beyond it, gently descended the stairs, and rambled out into the stable-yard. There was, upon most ordinary occasions a great deal of kindness and amenity in the countenance and manner of Mr. Selcroft, and upon most ordinary occasions this aspect and manner obtained for him much civility in return; here and there, indeed, he met with a rough, restive spirit who repaid his gentle smile by a look of suspicion and a

surly grunt that seemed to say, "Too civil by half," but this was by no means common.

On the present occasion, however, it was to a spirit of this rough order that he addressed himself as he paused in his progress through the yard, to look at a very handsome mare that was gently submitting herself to the discipline of the curry-comb.

"That's a very fine animal you have got there, my friend," said Mr. Selcroft.

The man gave him considerably less than half a look in reply, and continued his operation in silence.

"Who does she belong to?" he added, in a tone of great affability.

"To her master," replied the persevering curry-comber, beginning to utter the peculiar whistle which usage has appropriated to the process.

"She belongs to Mr. Harley, sir," said the bugle-player of the Eagle's Nest, with great civility, and stepping forward from the door of the stable as he spoke.

"Good morning, Mr. Saunders," said the reverend gentleman with very amiable con-

descension; "I hope you are not the worse for your exertions in our favour yesterday? You really play the bugle admirably."

"You are very kind, sir," replied the man, "but I don't play well enough to do what I attempted yesterday, and I would not have taken the liberty to try, only just to please my master, who was so set upon it."

"I suspect, my good friend, that you have more musical talent than you give yourself credit for.—However, I can perfectly well understand that any one in the service of Mr. Harley would find it difficult to refuse anything he asked," said Mr. Selcroft; adding, after the interval of a few seconds, "Have you lived with him long, Mr. Saunders?"

"Only since he come of age, sir," was the reply.

"And from his appearance, I presume that is no very long term?" rejoined Mr. Selcroft, with a sort of enquiring smile.

"Just two years, sir, and a week or two over," returned Saunders.

"His taking you at that particular time was a compliment, Mr. Saunders, for it seems

as if he had chosen you as soon as he had the power of choosing anything," said the clergyman. The footman made a smiling bow in reply, and seemed to be well pleased by the observation.

"I cannot help thinking that I have known some of your master's family, Saunders. He inherits a tolerably large property, doesn't he, in the North of England?"

"My master owns the finest estate in the county," replied the man, "but it isn't rightly in the North; I think, sir, 'tis in Somersetshire, not but what he has other estates besides, and it may be that some of them may lie right away northward; but for that I can't engage to say, because I have never been there."

"Yes, I am pretty sure I am not mistaken; I am pretty sure that the property I speak of is in the north. But I shall know in a moment, Mr. Saunders, if you will tell me what the family consist of. Are there many younger children?" said Mr. Selcroft.

"No, sir; nothing of the sort. So if your acquaintance was one of a large family, it

could not be my master, or any one belonging to him, for all the relations I ever heard of was one sister, and not a younger sister either; for according to what the housekeeper says she is five years older, though she don't look it. She is a very handsome young lady."

"They must be rather too young to keep house together, I should think?" said the beautiful Louisa's persevering father.

"They havn't never kept house together as yet, sir," replied Saunders, with an air of rather offended dignity; "for the aunt, Lady Frances Monkton, has always been at Harley Court whenever my master has had his sister there, since the death of their mother, Lady Jane."

Mr. Selcroft was now pretty well satisfied as to the position of the young man upon whose heart his daughter Louisa had made so evident an impression as to make it imperative upon him, as a matter of duty, to learn who and what he was; and having thus ably performed this truly paternal task, he re-entered the pleasant sitting-room allotted to his family, benignly smiling upon them all, and in so

evidently happy a frame of mind, that Lucy felt she could not take a fitter opportunity for proposing a plan upon which herself and her petted Louisa had set their hearts.

Their new acquaintance, Mr. Harley, had repeatedly mentioned, in the course of their rambles yesterday, the beauties of Muchross Abbey, and the charmingly romantic aspect of its cloisters and venerable burying-ground. This was quite enough to suggest the idea of another delightful excursion, and though Louisa did not quite think in her heart that Henry Harley meant to leave Killarney so very, *very* soon, she did not scruple, during their late and early consultations on the subject, to use the possibility of his doing so as an argument to induce Lucy to commence the attack upon papa as early as possible.

Never certainly was such an attack made under more favourable circumstances; in truth the consent was given before it was asked, for Mr. Selcroft had most decidedly made up his mind, before he entered the breakfast-room, that the sun must not set on that auspicious day till it had lighted them to the examination

of other groves and streams as redolent of beauty and of love, as those which they had visited yesterday.

Nor was it merely because he wished to indulge his beloved children with a repetition of the delights they had appeared so keenly to enjoy on the preceding day, that he was thus desirous that some such excursion should take place. It had been the avowed purpose and intention of all the Selcroft family, that this long-wished for Irish tour should be achieved with as much economy in all respects, as could be made, consistent with comfort; and they had hitherto, one and all of them, adhered to this purpose with very laudable constancy. But Mr. Selcroft felt that the circumstances in which they were now placed, loudly demanded a relaxation of their economical system. Though the possessor of a Harley Court, and the son of a Lady Jane, might walk along highways and byeways with a knapsack on his shoulders without laying himself open to any worse imputation than that of caprice, the necessity of attending to appearances in the case of pretty young ladies, was still as

stringent as in days of grandmother etiquette. Mr. Selcroft had muttered something ere the party separated on the preceding night, as to who was the proper person to apply about the price of the boat, upon which Henry Harley answered that, for the time being, the boat was his, and that he flattered himself it would be unnecessary to assure Mr. Selcroft that no circumstance could so greatly have increased the value of its possession in his eyes, as its having procured for him the honour and happiness of receiving such guests as those who had occupied it on the present occasion.

Nothing more, therefore, could be said about the boat or the banquet; but the careful father at once determined that his beautiful Louisa, and her family, should not appear to the eyes of Henry Harley, Esq., of Harley Court, who was decidedly the grandson of an earl, if not of a marquis or a duke, *in formâ pauperis*. Some sort of invitation must, *coute qui coute*, be given to him in return, and the scheme which the young ladies now proposed for this day's amusement offered an excellent opportunity for doing it.

It really would have been a pleasure for any good-natured person to have witnessed the sweet yielding smile, and to have heard the fond endearing voice, with which Mr. Selcroft delivered his benignant answer to his happy children.

"It is never an easy task, dear ones, to deny you any thing," he said; "but here, under this beauteous sky, methinks it would be impossible!" Lucy looked in her father's face for a moment, but then feeling herself too much disposed to laugh to suit the sentimental tone of his address, she darted off to a window, and throwing up the sash, leant out, as if to enjoy by anticipation the luxury of the delicious atmosphere in which they were to pass the day. But Louisa, despite all her happiness, and her very reasonable hope that, by some means or other, the adored companion of yesterday would be the adored companion of to-day, looked innocently into her father's face, with an expression that had a tinge of melancholy in it, for she thought how often her poor papa must have been made unhappy by being asked for so many

things in the way of finery, which either from piety or poverty he had been obliged to refuse! And he, dear man! finding it so very difficult all the time!

"I want your opinion, my love," resumed Mr. Selcroft, addressing his wife; "I want your opinion as to the propriety, the necessity I might almost say, of our asking this young stranger, this Mr. Henry Harley, to join us in our excursion to-day. Do you think it is possible to avoid it?"

"Do you wish to avoid it, my dear?" returned Mrs. Selcroft, with one of those irresistible impulses of sincerity which occasionally made her say such very awkward things to her husband.

But being as sensitive as she was thoughtless, she saw in a moment that she had made a blunder, and good-humouredly added, "I do assure you, my dear, that, as far as I am concerned, I think him very gentlemanlike and very agreeable, and he really did so much for us yesterday, that I think we are bound to do a little for him to-day."

This set everything right, and precisely in

a proper point of view, for doing which Mrs. Selcroft possessed an admirable facility, arising partly, perhaps, from habit, for she was often called upon to practise it. Sometimes indeed she so far forgot herself, or rather her position, as the sworn-to-be-obedient wife of a man who often required the practice of such a faculty in his helpmate, sometimes she would so far forget herself as to suffer a gleam of genuine truth to flash athwart the carefully arranged *demi jour* of her husband's exemplary statements of facts and motives; but such faults were always as promptly atoned for as hastily committed, and for the most part she kept the spirit of truth, which was an essential part of her nature, poor lady, as carefully concealed in her heart, as an incendiary keeps his dark lantern in his bosom. In short, Mrs. Selcroft was well fitted to enter Heaven as an excellent woman; but as long as she remained on earth, she had no chance of being anything more than an excellent wife.

No sooner had the amiable and always well-behaved Mr. Selcroft, received this sanction,

than he opened his little travelling writing-desk, and wrote the following note :—

"DEAR SIR,—The weather still continues so invitingly bright that we again purpose spending the day *al fresco*. Will you, if not otherwise engaged, join us in an excursion to Muchross?

"Believe me faithfully yours,

"WILLIAM SELCROFT."

The bell was rung, the note sent, and the subjoined reply returned with as little delay possible :—

"DEAR SIR,—It will give me great pleasure to join your party. I will attend you on horseback, and hold myself in readiness to start at any hour you will name.

"I remain faithfully yours,

"HENRY HARLEY."

And was it really with great pleasure that Henry Harley accepted such an invitation, after all his night thoughts beside the waterfall?

Yes. This answer may be received with the most implicit confidence as perfectly true. Not even Mrs. Selcroft herself could speak with greater sincerity were she to become, by some dreadful calamity, a widow. Nevertheless there was not one of those night thoughts beside the waterfall which had either been forgotten or disavowed by the morning thoughts of Henry Harley. He still felt that it was a matter of doubt whether his dearly beloved sister Fanny, and his passionately admired Louisa Selcroft, would suit each other as sisters. He still felt it was a matter of doubt whether the tone of the angel-faced Louisa's mind was in such perfect unison with his own, as to promise such sweet harmony between them through life, as would insure the happiness of both.

He had, indeed, no doubt whatever of the goodness, the gentleness, the tenderness of her character, but the result of all was the conviction that his attachment to her had come too suddenly upon him to be trusted, and that he owed it as much to her as to himself to keep clear of everything approaching a

declaration till time and opportunity had made them better acquainted with the most essential, yet least obvious points of character in each other.

But none of these wise thoughts, and wise they were, and wise he knew them to be, in any way interfered with his cultivating the acquaintance of the very charming family whom chance had thrown in his way, and it was, therefore, really with great pleasure that Henry Harley accepted the invitation.

Mr. Selcroft was exceedingly anxious just now to spend as little money as possible; for, to say the truth, he was rather "hard up," in consequence of his having permitted a Fancy Fair, for "the circulation of evangelical Church of England sermons among our African settlements," to be held in his garden the preceding year.

The fair itself indeed was a pic-nic fair, the expenses being borne in common by all the subscribers to the African Evangelical Association Fund; but he had been tempted by the report of a promised visit from a serious unmarried young baronet, to indulge Louisa with

a most becoming but rather expensive dress. For the same reason, too, he had been guilty of still greater imprudence, of giving sit-down refreshments in a marquée on the lawn, also at his own expense.

He was, however, spared the mortification of seeing his hopes disappointed, in consequence of any deficiency in the attractions of his daughter; for the serious baronet never came at all, and, therefore, could not fall in love with her.

But, nevertheless, these expenses had been very vexatious, as well as very inconvenient to him; and though he had been fortunate enough to let his parsonage-house to a summer tenant, (without which indeed he never would have indulged in the present excursion,) he was still bent upon preserving a very strict economy.

But he paused not a moment now in meditating upon the possibility of escaping from the unknown expenses of a Victoria *diner sur l'herbe.* "It must be done," was his first, his last, his only thought, as he perused the note of Mr. Harley, and without uttering one single

word in the way of consultation, either to his wife or to Lucy, a portable dinner for five was ordered, and a car also; his decision of purpose, and courage of execution, being sustained by the recollection of the many sacrifices made, and risks run by his ever-to-be-respected parents, before the marriage of his sister Smithers was accomplished.

Louisa half longed for, and half dreaded, the first glance of Henry's eye at the moment of meeting. The last she had received from him had been so very tender, that it seemed almost impossible the next should equal it, and if it did not, she was quite sure, as she told her sister Lucy, that she must die. And, by a feeling not quite sympathetic, Henry Harley too dreaded the first glance. He was conscious that he had made love, though he had not spoken it, and there was more of fear than of hope perhaps, in the anxiety he felt, as to whether she would tell him by that first glance that she remembered it all.

Nothing would have been so fatal to Louisa's interest, for nothing would have put him so much upon his guard as her raising her soft

heaven-tinted eyes to his, with the same expression as beamed from them when he murmured to her his last farewell on the preceding night. But she escaped this danger by the very intensity of the feeling that he trembled to encounter. Poor Louisa was too much in earnest to be at leisure to let her eyes say any thing but the exact truth, and as she was much more anxious to discover his feelings than to express her own, she gazed into his face with an innocent look of inquiry that completely put him out. It was exactly, he thought, such a look as she might have bestowed upon him, had she been anxious about his health, and wished to know if he had rested well.

He remembered how he had passed the greater part of the night, and had not a doubt that he was looking paler than usual, and that she perceived it. There was nothing alarming in this, however, and it put him at his ease at once.

On arriving at Muchross, the party fell into the same order of march as on the preceding day; Mr. Selcroft, by giving one arm to his

wife, and the other to his eldest daughter, left the poor little *cadette* to the charge of any one who would have the kindness to take care of her.

There are few spots perhaps more likely to encourage the growth of tender feelings, than the old cloisters and picturesque burying ground of Muchross. The whole scene is solemn, but, despite all its memorials of the dead, it is still more redolent of romance than of gloom, and the imagination is more on the alert to trace the history of the past, than to quail before the relics of its denizens, and the tone and colouring of the whole scene is even more beautiful than it is melancholy.

And then there are so many individual objects which demand and deserve examination, that it would be impossible to keep any party together, however much they might wish to be so; for one will be called here, and another there, till at last any two who do not happen to find it necessary to go in different directions, are pretty sure of finding themselves alone together, without the least effort on their own part to produce such a result.

Lucy was an indefatigable climber, and very soon after they had entered the interesting precincts of Muchross Abbey, she might be seen aloft making her way upon the top of the walls that surround the cloister. Her father could do no less than follow, in order to take care of her; and as to Mrs. Selcroft, she had established herself on an unostentatious tombstone, from whence she was making a very clever sketch of a choice bit, in which trees, walls, weeds, and tombs, all conspired to make a picture.

What, then, was left for Henry Harley and Louisa, but to creep quietly about and take care of each other.

They appeared to be very well contented, however, and complained not at all, either of the study which Mrs. Selcroft was bestowing on her sketch, or the seemingly elaborate lecture with which her learned spouse was regaling their eldest daughter, *à propos*, of the interesting ecclesiastical antiquities by which they were surrounded.

But for the credit of Henry Harley let it be observed that during the whole of this very

enchanting interval, which lasted for more than an hour, he never once permitted anything like an avowal of love to pass his lips. Nevertheless, the tender-hearted Louisa scarcely felt herself disappointed. There was so much watchful attention to every step she took, lest she should bruise her pretty feet against a stone, so evident a wish to lead her into conversation that might induce her to express her thoughts and feelings, and so earnest a manner of listening to every syllable she uttered, that, to quote the phrase she used to Lucy afterwards, "she could not help thinking that he did like her a little."

And he certainly did like her a good deal more than a little.

He still thought her by far the most beautiful creature he had ever seen, and moreover felt very deeply convinced that "he never should behold her like again." . . . . He felt, too, and not, perhaps, without some reason, that he might win the affection of the angelic creature beside him, did he only give her reason to believe that she would be loved in return. Yet still the wise night-thoughts were

remembered, and he only made himself as agreeable as it was possible for man to do without explicitly declaring himself a lover.

But there was no falsehood, no intended deception in this, and if Lucy had listened to him instead of Louisa, she would probably have discovered the exact state of the case, and have perceived that though the young man was in very act and deed falling desperately in love, he had still sufficient discretion left to abstain from confessing it till a longer acquaintance might justify his doing so.

This lengthened and very interesting examination of the Abbey Cloisters and burying-ground, was at last followed by an extended ramble through the grounds, and a visit to the house. And here, again, the Rev. Mr. Selcroft displayed his knowledge of the business he was upon. He remembered every circumstance respecting the courtship of his beautiful sister, and being persuaded that Mr. Smithers would never have offered at all if he had had everything quite his own way from the first, he brought Lucy to the embowered

spot where Louisa and Henry were seated on a tomb, apparently in deep contemplation of the illegible record of him who slept below, and said in his most light and lively manner,

"Now, my young friend, we must change partners, if you please. My Louisa, young as she is, can listen to a little of her father's antiquarian lore as patiently as her elder sister, and as profitably, too . . . . Give me your arm, Louy, dear, and tell me what your feelings are in gazing on a scene of such deep solemnity as this? . . . . Do you not feel the brevity, the bitterness . . . ."

The rest was lost in distance, for it was not the purpose of Mr. Selcroft to convert the *tête-à-tête* arrangements into a *partie carré*, and he made this distinctly evident by the pace at which he walked forward with the unresisting but deeply vexed Louisa.

Mrs. Selcroft, meanwhile, had begged leave of absence from this lengthened excursion, not only on the plea of finishing her sketch, but in order that she might assist the car-driver, who was their only attendant, in arranging the repast they had brought with them; the

cloisters having been fixed upon as their banqueting-room.

Yes; Mr. Selcroft decidedly knew what he was about when he took away Louisa from her admirer, and left his daughter Lucy in her place. For well he knew that we rarely prize any treasure "at its worth while we enjoy it. But being lost and gone, why then we reach the value." And well he knew also that there was a piquant gusto in the talk of Lucy, which might have an effect on Mr. Harley's spirits somewhat analogous to that of the notes of a fife after listening to a lute.

Rather more startling than soothing, perhaps; but infallibly making the lute's soft tone appear a thousand times sweeter afterwards. Moreover, it was impossible that any man living could fancy that any family was a dull family, of which Lucy was a member. All this was exceedingly well reasoned, and ably acted upon. The excellent, but by no means regularly placed, banquet was managed with equal skill; there was every possible facility for love-making, save only what might have suggested the idea of its *being done on*

purpose, and of this there was none. But despite all this, Henry Harley once again reached the Victoria Hotel without having uttered any thing that could be construed into that boldest of all specimens of human eloquence, "Will you marry me?"

CHAPTER X.

His own discretion on this trying occasion gave Henry Harley confidence in himself for the future. He delighted in the Killarney scenery, every feature of it seemed to him lovelier than anything he had ever seen elsewhere. Then why should he run away from it before it was half seen? Would not Fanny laugh at him, could she know that he positively meditated flight as the only means of escaping matrimony with an angel who, in his estimation, was not quite so clever as himself? . . . . "I either love her, or do not love her," thought he. "If I love her, clever or not, the best thing I can do is to marry her, for in my

soul I believe that she loves me. And if I do not love her, by far the wisest way will be to let her, or her sharp-witted sister, Lucy, find it out by degrees, and then we may part without any heart-breaking on either side."

By reasoning such as this the young man persuaded himself without much difficulty that it would be great folly to leave what was so very enjoyable; but despite all his caution and discretion, there was enough of admiration visible in every look he directed to Louisa, to persuade her and all her family that an offer of marriage must come at last.

And, in truth, things did seem going on very much in that direction, so much so, indeed, as to leave Mr. Selcroft without any doubt on the subject. He had narrowly watched the progression of the affair, and was well satisfied that the wished-for result was inevitable; and then it was that he felt it necessary to display a little more openly the strictness of the religious opinions by which he professed to regulate his own conduct and that of his family.

A good many family allusions were made to Bible-meetings and African Associations to

which Henry did not appear to pay any particular attention, a species of indifference which was the more important, because Mr. Selcroft's long-cherished hopes of preferment rested wholly on his interest with the most decidedly evangelical prelate on the bench. The personal intimacy between the family of the Bishop of M—— and that of Mr. Selcroft was very considerable, and was cherished by that gentleman as the choicest boon that Heaven had bestowed upon him. Now he well knew that it was quite impossible his daughter Louisa could accept the offer of any man without asking advice, or rather the consent, of the Bishop of M——, and though Mr. Selcroft felt a rational confidence of his lordship's approval of a connection that offered so many advantages, he was aware that this could not be pronounced till a personal introduction had taken place between the parties. Now Mr. Selcroft was also aware that this personal introduction must be in some sort prepared for on the part of his intended son-in-law, and he therefore determined to accustom him as gently as possible to the little external peculiarities of the elect.

Mr. Selcroft was, as the reader must by this time be aware (if his historian has done him anything like justice) a man of excellent judgment and discretion, and it was therefore with great delicacy and considerable caution that he set about the process by which he purposed to initiate Mr. Harley into the peculiarities of the evangelical connection.

He began by changing, perhaps we might have called it, purifying, his phraseology. Instead of the word *always*, he now used *always*, and when, as was very familiarly his wont, he spoke of the Supreme Being, he never pronounced the word GOD, however reverend the theme might be, but spoke only of "*the Lord.*"

But all this, and much more of the same kind, might have passed by, without greatly exciting the attention of Henry, and it was the perceiving this which caused Mr. Selcroft to feel the necessity of going further towards his initiation into the peculiarities of that division of the church (militant, alas! too literally) into which he was about to be introduced.

With this view he gradually lengthened his grace at the dinner table, gradually interlarded the most lively sallies of his conversation by little studied, though seemingly impromptu homilies, and gradually took to hinting (*tant bien que mal*) at the vanity of church ordinances, and the necessity of saving grace, specifically accorded to sinning saints.

To most men as much in love as Henry Harley now was, all this might have gone on much longer without awakening them to the consciousness of any important religious difference of opinion. But in his way, perhaps, Henry Harley was a fanatic too. He was, in fact, deeply religious, but with an almost unconscious repugnance to dogma, or any doctrinal rule of thought or creed. Yet it was only by slow degrees that he discovered the opinions of the smooth Mr. Selcroft and his obedient family. Nor did he, till it was too late to avoid something very like entanglement, fully comprehend the peculiarities of their sect. The peculiarities of their doctrine he never could fancy he understood at all, so repugnant did they seem in his judgment to all our Mas-

TER has taught. But this difference alone would have mattered little, had it been permitted to rest peacefully in silent conviction, as his own faith did. That quiet, deep-rooted faith, which was as essentially a part of his being as the circulation of his blood, led him to adore, in the full sense of the word, the power, the wisdom, and the goodness, of his Creator. It led him also to study and to receive as law divine the precepts of our Saviour. But he was restive and rebellious under every attempt made by man to interpret the will of God according to laws not manifest to all. The doctrines of infidelity, however, were, if possible, more distasteful to him than those of any species of priestcraft; for the mistakes of the latter were the result of faulty education, whereas the monstrous delusions, and impious ingratitude of the former, testified what he conceived to be a radically defective nature. The stupendously important doctrine of the immortality of the soul, rested not, in his opinion, solely on the testimony of the GREAT TEACHER, but was revealed to us by inference too well founded on experience to

be rejected by any mind of healthy constitution. All observation proved the craving for it to be as essentially a part of our nature as the craving for all the other boons and blessings which our Creator has bestowed, and which he has ordained should be both wished for and enjoyed; and deep and firm lay the assurance in his soul, that in like manner as disappointment does not meet us in our other natural cravings, so neither will it meet us here.

He was a Christian as fully as the firmest belief in the divine mission of Christ could make him, and he adored his law with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength. Moreover, in whatever land he sojourned professing belief in this divine revelation, he studiously avoided giving offence to the religious feelings of any, by acting in open opposition to the laws therein enjoyed, for he approved not persecution either in the shape of burning, or of bullying; but on the other hand he suffered not the high priesthood of any land to come between God and his own conscience; for, young as he was, his reading

had been already deep enough to convince him that the only check which the progress of the Christian religion had met, or rather that the only obstacle which has ever had any permanent effect in retarding its destined progress over the earth, sprang like a noxious weed from the corruption of the sacerdotal power.

The religion of Henry Harley made him very happy, for he felt and declared that, with him, Faith and Hope were the same; and feeling that he was as far removed from indifference on the subject, as the east is from the west, he, for this very reason, perhaps, was more peculiarly averse to making the subject of religious belief a theme for conversation. He wished not to wage wordy war with any who might differ from him in opinion; for he felt it to be a very solemn, as well as very difficult act, that of framing and stating, in set words and phrases, the thoughts that in their vast sublimity are so often "beyond the reaches of our souls."

All such talk was to him very decidedly taking the name of God in vain; and though

he would neither have fined a man, nor sent him to the tread-mill, for entering upon a disquisition on the most occult purposes of his Creator, he never listened to anything of the kind when he could avoid it.

To such a man as this it may easily be understood that the species of colloquial godliness in which Mr. Selcroft was beginning to indulge, was most peculiarly distasteful, and had it not been that many excursions had been already planned, in which he had promised to join, it is highly probable that Henry might have been tempted to "cut short the preaching and his love at once."

But nothing had occurred that could in any way justify his behaving so rudely to the ladies of the party; for although no well-trained tame lambkins could have less the spirit of controversy in them than Mrs. Selcroft and Louisa, and no petted kitten more discretion than Lucy, it was easy enough to perceive that although they all submitted to be led in the way they were to go, they had no genuine fanaticism in their hearts, and that had it so happened that the reverend head of

the family had fixed his hopes of preferment upon a high church bishop, instead of a low church bishop, the ladies would have been found embroidering altar cloths, instead of adapting sacred words to opera airs.

Henry Harley, therefore, did not feel himself justified in suddenly releasing himself by flight from the fascinations of the beautiful girl who seemed habitually, and as a matter of course, to have become his especial companion, and the possessor of his arm in all the excursions that the Killarney guide pointed out.

CHAPTER XI.

THUS sort of very liberal *laissez aller* was certainly not without danger to either party, for Henry Harley was very far from thinking the beauty of Louisa grew less enchanting the more he gazed upon it; and the gentle Louisa was equally far from feeling the least doubt that Henry Harley was the most charming man in the world. But neither of them saw any danger in this, though they were both fully conscious of the fact. In this case, as in many others,

"A different cause the same effect will give."

Henry Harley feared not to trust hi
within reach of the fascinations of Lo
because he had made up his mind to be
that, all things considered, it would be bes
them both that he should not yield to t
And, meanwhile, Louisa had arrived a
equally firm conviction that there coul
no danger in listening to his delightful
versation because she had not the least d
in the world that it was his intention to m
her.

As to her mother and sister, they were
upon this occasion, as upon all others, by
will of Mr. Selcroft, and his will was
matters should be permitted to take t
course; a doctrine that has often been
lowed under similar circumstances, and
unfrequently with a successful result.

It happened upon one occasion that t
were overtaken by so sudden and violen
thunder-storm on the lake, as first to be
poor Henry into somewhat more unequiv
expressions of tenderness, while endeavou
to soothe the terrors of Louisa, than he
ever yet ventured to utter, and next to s

the said terrified Louisa so completely to the skin as to lay the foundation for a severe illness.

Though never hitherto unhealthy, she had been always delicate, and every member of her family, as well as Henry himself, became dreadfully alarmed for her life. She certainly was very ill, the fever violent, and her strength failing; nevertheless when the crisis came, she passed it favourably, and all their dismal fears were now changed for the most consolatory hopes. But by the time this happy change had fully declared itself, the period had now more than arrived at which Henry had pledged himself to meet his sister and his aunt at Harley Court.

Till Louisa was declared to be out of danger, he had felt it impossible to go; but when the welcome sentence of convalescence was pronounced, he delayed no longer, confessing that he ought to have taken his departure before, but frankly avowing that he had felt it impossible to do so, as long as the result of this fearful illness was unknown.

"You are very kind to say so, my dear sir,

and believe me, when I assure you that we all feel flattered by the expression of so friendly a feeling," said Mr. Selcroft; adding very politely, "I am sure we shall all miss you very much. When do you think of starting?"

"To-morrow it must be," replied the young man, not without feeling rather more emotion as he said so than he wished should be visible, and he rose up and walked to the window.

He had done better had he sat still, if his object was to appear indifferent in the eyes of Mr. Selcroft. But that watchful gentleman understood his feelings probably better than he did himself; and near as the moment of separation was, and safe as Henry Harley still considered himself, Mr. Selcroft never felt less disposed to despair of success in obtaining this excellent match for his daughter than he did at that moment.

Henry passed the whole of that evening in a long and very decidedly melancholy ramble through many of the scenes that he had previously visited with the lovely, the gentle Louisa on his arm, and more than once in the course of it did he feel inclined to

doubt the wisdom of a decision which was to divide him for ever from one he could have so fondly loved . . .

"Might I not have gone abroad for a year or two with her and Fanny?" thought he; "and would not that effectually have cured her of all the cant she has been taught by her hypocritical father?"

But all such thoughts came too late now. "Sweet creature!" he exclaimed. "In all human probability I shall never behold her again, nor can I ever hope again to behold anything half so lovely, half so innocent, or half so well inclined to love me . . . . Me! cold, cautious, and wary! Sweet soul! she deserves a more disinterested and less calculating love than mine! . . . . And she will find it too . . . And the next tidings I shall hear of the Selcroft family will be that Louisa is married!"

His homeward walk was not a gay one, and this time his night thoughts had more of regret than prudence in them.

His horses were ordered to be ready at eleven o'clock on the following morning, and a

little after ten he sent Saunders to the sitting-room occupied by the Selcroft family, to inquire if he might wait upon them to say farewell before his departure.

The answer of course was, that they should be happy to see him whenever he would do them the favour of calling.

This answer had not been delivered many minutes before he knocked at their door, for to say the truth he dreaded the interview, and heartily wished it over. He opened the door and made one step into the room, but then he stopped short, as if spell-bound, for immediately before his eyes, and to his extreme astonishment he beheld the form of Louisa! She was reclining in a deep arm-chair, and supported by cushions; but though both her attitude and aspect spoke weakness, she had never, perhaps, looked more touchingly beautiful than she did at that moment.

The little lace cap tied with a delicate knot of white satin ribbon under her chin, while a few bright curls escaped from its shelter upon her brow and cheek, gave a totally new style to her beauty, and the ardent gaze he fixed

upon her, was equally made up of surprise, admiration, and tenderness. Her mother was seated on one side of her, and Lucy stood behind her chair, leaning over her with a look of great anxiety.

"You look frightened at seeing her, Mr. Harley," said her mother, "and certainly we had none of us any idea that she had strength enough to make such an effort. But the thought that you should go without bidding her farewell, seemed to give her so much pain, that her good doctor thought it better she should be indulged."

Henry, inexpressibly touched, and greatly agitated, sprang hastily forward to receive the hand she endeavoured to extend to him. At the moment he entered a delicate flush had animated her features, but ere he reached the footstool of her chair it had faded, leaving her as pale as ivory.

Yet still the delicate, emaciated hand was extended towards him, and by a movement that was perfectly involuntary he dropped upon his knee before her, as he received it. The seeing him at all was more than she had

strength to bear, and the seeing him kneeling at her feet completely overpowered her.

"Oh! Mr. Harley!" she murmured faintly, and then her eyes closed, and she fell back in a state of perfect insensibility.

"We have killed her amongst us!" cried Lucy, in vehement agitation. "Go, sir, go! This would never have happened had my advice been taken."

"Leave us, dear sir! Leave us!" said Mrs. Selcroft more gently, but with equal earnestness. "Perhaps you will have the goodness," she added, "to send one of the waiters to Killarney, to summon Dr. M——."

Harley had stood with his eyes immovably fixed on the death-like face of Louisa while these words were spoken by both mother and daughter, but Mrs. Selcroft's last sentence caused him to leave the room with the greatest possible rapidity, and rushing to the stables he seized one of his own horses, already prepared for starting, and, springing into the saddle himself, was at the doctor's door in considerably less time than any other man would have been, let him be whom he might, or as obedient as he would.

The result of all this is easily guessed and soon told. It was, of course, impossible for Mr. Harley to leave the hotel till the result of this alarming attack was ascertained. The insensibility did not last long, neither did it leave any seriously alarming symptoms; nevertheless it would have been detestably unfeeling, had the young man now departed the moment she recovered her senses, when it was so evident that the idea of his going had caused her to lose them.

In short, neither his heart nor his honour could now permit his departure till he had whispered in the ear of Louisa all that she most wished to hear, nor till he had, with all proper solemnity and etiquette, asked her hand in marriage from the reverend father who had so long been perfectly well disposed to accord it to him.

CHAPTER XII.

THE struggle once over, and his resolution taken, Henry Harley very wisely gave all doubting drawbacks to his happiness to the winds, and a greater proof of the resolute spirit with which he contemplated his engagement cannot be given, than by repeating the words which he muttered to himself as he took his first solitary walk after the deed was done. "If Fanny does not like her," said he, "she ought to like her. The fault will be neither in my lovely Louisa nor myself, and she is too good and too wise not to conquer, in time, feelings that can only arise from prejudice."

Nevertheless he did not quite forget that he

had behaved apparently with great rudeness to his aunt Lady Frances, and with greatly less consideration for his sister than was usual with him ; for both these ladies had now been, for nearly a fortnight, visitors in his house with no master of it to welcome them, and with no better explanation of his absence than the vague assurance that he was prevented by unavoidable circumstances from returning home.

Now, however, there would be no longer anything vague in his excuses. He had only to state the simple facts that he was engaged to be married, and that his affianced bride had been so ill as to be considered for several days in great danger, in order to explain very fully, if not very satisfactorily, why it was that he had not made his appearance at home.

It was speedily settled between Mr. Harley and his future father-in-law, that their next meeting was to be in London, the living of Mr. Selcroft being at the distance of half-an-hour's railroad travelling of the capital ; when all further preliminaries would be settled between them, and arrangements made for a

speedy solemnization of the intended marriage. That the parting between the lovers was a tender one, may very easily be imagined; and the still delicate state of Louisa's health, naturally increased the reluctance with which Henry parted from her. But it was only for a few short weeks that they were to be separated, and this gave them both courage to endure a parting that both felt to be severely painful.

The eyes of his sister Fanny, and the eyes of his aunt, Lady Frances, also asked more questions than their lips, concerning the future relative who had made so sudden a conquest of the umquhile rational and reflective Henry. But to their spoken questions respecting her, he only replied by naming the station in life of her very respectable family; and referring to their future knowledge of herself to explain why, and how it was, that he had been unable to resist her. To the questionings of their eyes, he said nothing, for these consisted in occasional looks of eager interest whenever anything relative to the intellectual pursuits of his future wife had been hinted at; and he

probably felt, that, upon this subject, it would be better for them to form their opinions from a personal acquaintance with the sweet, gentle angel he was about to present to them, than from anything he could say upon the subject.

Such a reference as this *might* have been made in a way to give them great confidence in the result; but somehow or other it was not so. Henry constantly spoke of her with rapturous admiration and impassioned tenderness, but both the aunt and the niece felt that he did not mean to make them conceive a too exalted idea of her talents. This might be for the sake of managing an agreeable surprise for them;—or it might be that with all his passionate love, he was conscious that she did not reach the standard which he knew they would expect in his wife. But in all this they were left to their own conjectures. To question him directly on such a point was of course impossible, and if he read any such wish in their eyes, it was clearly evident that he was not disposed to gratify it. A few weeks glided rapidly away, even in absence from his beloved, for Henry Harley

had a great deal of real business upon his hands. There were settlements to be drawn, and a carriage to be built, and an exquisitely pretty *boudoir* to be fitted up at Harley Court. But he had time enough for it all, for Louisa was still only convalescent, and the short letters with which she indulged him, and the longer ones of the more communicative Lucy, made it evident that her journey to England must not be hurried in any way, but made by short stages, and with as little fatigue as possible.

This delicate state of health made both Lady Frances and her niece uneasy. Was it constitutional delicacy? Or was it an accidental malady? "Or is it the result of the tender passion?" said Lady Frances. "And is this hasty marriage the mode which Henry has hit upon to restore her health?" Fanny did not smile; on the contrary she frowned as she replied, "We have never seen Henry act the part of a fool yet, aunt Frances, and we have no right to suspect him of it now."

"Very true, my dear," replied her ladyship. "We have no right at all."

At length, however, Henry had the happiness of hearing that Louisa was evidently gaining strength every day, and that it was the purpose of the Selcroft family to set off from Killarney immediately, and to let the speed of their journey depend entirely upon Louisa's power of enduring its fatigue.

This, of course, gave Henry some days of very anxious expectation, but at length the wished-for intelligence reached him that the family had arrived at Barton Rectory, and that Louisa had borne the journey admirably.

With the thoughtful tenderness of real affection the anxious Henry waited till the following day before he presented himself at the rectory, so anxious was he to avoid causing her such agitation as their meeting might be likely to produce, till she had been restored by a night's rest from the fatigue of the journey.

But the wished-for moment came at last, and the tender Louisa forgot all she had suffered when once again she saw the beloved Harley at her feet. But as for Henry himself, his happiness was very painfully checked by

observing the legible marks which her long illness had left on the face and form of his beautiful Louisa. Beautiful, indeed, she still was, if possible, perhaps, more touchingly beautiful than before; but she was both pale and thin, and notwithstanding all the energy of her joy at seeing him there was an air of languor about her which made him feel that she must indeed have suffered severely.

She perceived the tender alarm that his countenance expressed as he looked at her. "Fear not for my health now, dearest Henry," she said. "While that horrid Irish Channel was between us, I certainly did feel as if I should never again find strength enough to cross it. But now, now that I know I may see you every day, unless, indeed, you get tired of me, now I feel as if no milk-maid was ever so strong and so healthy."

And, assuredly, her health very decidedly improved after her return to Barton. The old family nurse declared that it was her native air which had so rapidly produced this improvement, but Lucy and her mother fancied that the vicinity of Henry Harley had a good

deal to do with it. As to the well-pleased rector himself he had no time to waste on such sentimental speculations. He knew that his daughter had been very ill, but he knew also that she appeared to be rapidly getting well again, and this was quite enough to satisfy him, without wasting his precious time in idle conjectures upon the subject. In his own secret heart he did not really believe that love had anything to do either with her illness, or her recovery from it. He knew that she had caught a violent cold, which had brought on fever. This had left her weak, but now it was gone, and she was becoming strong again. So on this point his mind was perfectly easy, and all his faculties were happily left at leisure to devise the means of soothing away all the little difficulties, which he was aware still existed, before the splendid marriage of his beautiful Louisa could take place with the entire approbation of his friend and patron the Bishop of M——.

His first step was to ascertain the precise state of the reverend gentleman's health, who was incumbent of the valuable living to which

the bishop had often alluded as the future residence of his friend the rector of Barton; and on this point the information he received was as satisfactory as any information could be, which did not positively state that the wished-for event had actually taken place, and that the released twelve hundred a year was waiting for his acceptance.

Mr. Selcroft had already written to the Bishop of —— on the subject of the brilliant proposal of marriage which had been made to his daughter. His letter was as follows:—

"I will not apologize, my dear lord, for thus breaking in upon the time of one whose every hour is so inestimably valuable as those of your lordship, did not the weighty consciousness of my duty as a father forbid my taking any important step respecting either of my children, without asking for your lordship's advice and sanction. In the course of our little Irish excursion, to which you, my lord, so amiably gave your sanction as a means of recruiting my strength after my ardent though unworthy efforts at the various Church meet-

ings during the late arduous London season, in the course of this delightful little tour, my lord, an accident brought us acquainted with a young man of the name of Harley—Henry Harley, son and heir to the late Henry Harley who was repeatedly Member of Parliament for the county of ——, where he has large estates and a splendid residence known by the name of Harley Court. The mother of our new acquaintance was the Lady Jane, third daughter to the Earl of Randalby. It has pleased the Disposer of all things both in heaven and earth, that a mutual affection should spring up between my daughter Louisa and this young man. Louisa, my dear lord, is my youngest child; the one who has so often been honoured, might I not almost say sanctified, by your lordship's pastoral notice, in consequence of the Christian gentleness of her disposition. Mr. Harley states his income to be rather above twelve thousand per annum, and he proposes to settle two thousand a year upon my dear, good child, which is to go to younger children at her death, or in default of such, to revert to his natural heir. This is a great offer, my dear

lord, for a young girl so portionless as my poor Louisa; nevertheless I have frankly told the young man that I must withhold my final consent till it has received the sanction of a venerated friend, without whose advice and approbation I could never feel satisfied to trust my own judgment on any point.

"Of course your lordship's honoured name was not alluded to; I know the sacred value of the light which guides me too well, and feel its holiness too deeply, to point it out ostentatiously to the unlicensed gaze of any one. I shall, then, wait for your lordship's judgment in this matter before I permit any thing to be finally settled, and I remain, my dear lord, with equal veneration, gratitude, and obedience, your lordship's faithful and devoted servant,

"WILLIAM SELCROFT."

To this dutiful epistle the rector of Barton received the following reply within a few days after he had begun to expect it:

"REV. SIR, AND WELL-ESTEEMED FRIEND,

"Your communication has caused me

considerable anxiety, for like everything else in this dark valley of tears, wherein, for the inherited crimes of our most sinful natures, we are doomed to pass through the dark ordeal of the shadow of death till that moment arrives, so terrible to the many, so blessed to the few, in which our doom, foreknown from all eternity, and to all eternity unchangeable, will at last be pronounced to us—like everything else, I say, in this world of sin and misery, your intelligence may very probably, under the semblance of good, conceal a thousand hidden evils that should make us tremble! Nevertheless, my dear Mr. Selcroft, after mature consideration, for I do assure you I have permitted my mind to rest upon the subject for a longer period than I usually devote to anything, save the duties of that tremendous position to which I have been called by the will of my Master; after mature deliberation, I say, I am of opinion that it is your duty to permit the union of Mr. Harley, of Harley Court, with your gentle and well-disposed danghter, Louisa.

"Of course it will be necessary to test the

young man's religious opinions and principles; for it is a very soul-destroying doctrine, which leads any one to suppose that we can touch pitch and not be defiled. However, I do not believe that it is required of us to exact an equal portion of grace from all. Opportunity may have been wanting. Evil associations may have rendered the ignorance of saintly doctrine and of saintly speech almost inevitable, and in such a case, all that we can do is to apply the test of enlightening instruction. Neither the name of the young man himself, nor that of the noble family with whom he is maternally connected, are among those upon whom the seal of election has visibly fallen. Of course we must wish that this were otherwise, but all that we can do towards conversion must be promptly and firmly done. And herein, my good friend, I cordially offer my services, and I will not permit myself to doubt but that by the help of the fervent prayers of yourself and family, and of myself, the humble bishop of your souls, the result will be every thing we wish. I will leave it to yourself, my good Mr. Selcroft, to fix the time for introducing this young gentleman to

me. Business of importance will oblige me to pay a visit at Lambeth in the course of next week, and if it will suit you to give me a dinner and a bed on Friday next, I will make it a point of duty to keep myself free for that day; and I confidently hope that I shall not take leave of you and your amiable family on the following day, without being able, conscientiously, to pronounce my sanction to your daughter's marriage. I remain, dear Mr. Selcroft,

"Your faithful friend,

"M——."

"P.S. I am told, on good authority, that our excellent friend, the rector of Elmland, cannot live many weeks. Dropsy, it seems, has declared itself in a manner not to be mistaken. It is a consolation to me to think that his important station in the fold will be supplied when he is gone by one in whom I have entire confidence."

The feelings produced by this epistle were of a very mixed character. The postscript was certainly a very delightful postscript, and never

best hope that such a happy adjustment might be possible, arose from the fact that Henry was at the present moment with his aunt and sister at Harley Court, and that it was extremely probable he would not return from thence in time to meet the bishop on the day he had named. But on this important point he was obliged to trust to probabilities, for it was quite impossible that he should venture to write to the young man, begging him to prolong his absence.

He was not, however, without hope that (to use his own expression) Providence might favour him in this matter, for his last reply to Louisa, when she had urged him to return as soon as possible was, "Trust me, sweet love, I shall make no unnecessary delay."

But would compliance with the affectionate wishes of such near relatives be considered as unnecessary delay? Surely not; and that they would petition for a few more hours and days than it had been his intention to allow them, could scarcely be doubted. As to making any attempt to put off the visit so condescendingly volunteered by the prelate, it

was not to be thought off. Mr. Selcroft felt the danger of such a measure as that, in every view.

There are people, prodigiously condescending people, that is to say, people from whom every civil bend is intended as a condescension; who experience a vehemence of irritation, if the said condescension be not graciously and gracefully received, which is of the most dangerous kind. There are such people, and the Bishop of M—— was of them. This was a fact extremely well known to Mr. Selcroft, and therefore it was that he so resolutely determined to take his chance, rather than hint to the bishop that it would be more convenient if he would postpone the proffered honour of a visit to a future opportunity.

CHAPTER XIII.

DESPITE his conscious dignity, both as a bishop and a man, this right reverend prelate by no means disliked the passing an occasional day with his very old acquaintance, Mr. Selcroft. Such prelates as the Bishop of M—— will ever be found, if carefully looked after in such matters, to talk of their old college companions and school-fellows as "old acquaintance," rarely tampering with what they donbtless consider as so sacred a name as that of friend. But with his old acquaintance at Barton Rectory, the Bishop of M—— not unfrequently passed a tranquil day, which

might truly be said to combine dignity and leisure.

For no bishop could find himself more completely at leisure than he who for the time being had nothing to do but wander among roses and honeysuckle, peaches and pine-apples, with two very pretty girls to watch for every word that fell from his right reverend lips, and pick it up as if it were a diamond or a ruby, while his dignity could scarcely be in safer keeping than when he was explicitly told by his host that his word was law, not only human law, but divine law also, and that any human being mad enough to differ from him in opinion, was only fit for Bedlem.

Any little hope which Mr. Selcroft had been sanguine enough to foster as to the possibility of avoiding a collision between his estimable intended son-in-law and his inestimable patron the bishop, was speedily overthrown by the arrival of both those personages at Barton Rectory very punctually at the time they had respectively named.

Louisa was still so much an invalid that she did not leave the quiet little apartment

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At length, however, the
announced, and Henry Ha

Poor anxious Mr. Selcroft's first qualm arose from the necessity of pronouncing a grace about twice as long as any which Henry had ever heard from him before, and one, moreover, crammed full of all those pattern phrases so richly emblazoned on the banners under which Exeter Hall carries on its warfare.

Very nearly in the middle of this, Henry unfortunately sat down, believing truly, poor young man, that it *must* be over; but he repaired the blunder as well as he could by immediately standing up again. But this was no atonement in the eyes of the bishop, who half raised his devout eyelids to give way to a glance of inexpressible indignation, which was not, however, directed to Henry, but to Mr. Selcroft. And very justly too; for was it not evident that he had not only accepted for his son-in-law a man uninitiated in one of the most obvious duties of a serious Christian, but that in all the dinings they must have had together, he had never so far redeemed the time past, as to familiarize him with a duty which he, the Bishop of M——, thought so particularly essential?

The unfortunate Mr. Selcroft caught this fearful glance, and his voice almost failed him before he reached the still distant "Amen" which permitted the company to take possession of their chairs.

But the soup was excellent, and so was the fish, and the fish-sauce. How delightful, too, was the cucumber gathered in the morning dew, and touched only by the fairy fingers of Lucy, from the moment when it was still appended to its native stem, to that when it regaled the eyes and the nose of the right reverend guest.

In short, as long as the dinner lasted, theology seemed to be forgotten, so much so, indeed, that the bishop (having taken wine with both the ladies, and thrice with his host, on account of their being two sorts of sherry, on the merits of which Mr. Selcroft was very anxious to decide) actually condescended to invite Henry Harley also to take wine with him.

Mr. Selcroft gave Lucy a look of rapture; nor did he feel the compliment to be at all less touching because the bishop thought proper, in some degree, to explain it by saying, while

their glasses were still in their hands, "I hope your aunt, the Lady Frances Monkton, is well, Mr. Harley? I had the pleasure of meeting her at dinner at Lord Nightingale's some time ago?"

An interesting event which really had taken place some half-dozen years before.

But, alas! when the genial hour was past, the unfortunate Mr. Selcroft plainly perceived that this indulgent spirit was passed also; for although his lordship, as long as Henry remained in the dining-room, continued, from time to time, to address him very graciously, even alluding to the fine oaks for which, as he said, the grounds of Harley Court were celebrated, the young man no sooner left the room, which, to say the truth, he did within about five minutes after the exit of Mrs. Selcroft and Lucy, than the bishop shook his head, while even in the act of pouring out a bumper of his host's excellent port, and said, with a very decided contraction of the brow,—"That's a fine handsome young man, and he looks very much as if he had been in good society, which is an advantage, Mr. Selcroft, incontestably an

advantage; but I am sadly afraid, my good sir, that there are other and more important points on which it will not be so easy to satisfy ourselves. How came it, sir, that he sat down in the middle of the grace? It could scarcely have been from ignorance, as he must repeatedly, I presume, have heard you pronounce the same before. Yet if it was intended as an overt act of impiety, it was, of course, worse still. Such an idea makes me shudder, Mr. Selcroft, and it ought to make you shudder too, sir."

"Indeed it ought, my dear lord," replied his greatly distressed host. "But such is not the case; I do not always pronounce the same grace, my lord, and it is possible, I really cannot exactly say, but I think it is very possible that he never heard that grace before."

"I rather wonder at that, Mr. Selcroft," rejoined the bishop, "inasmuch as it is the form I always make use of myself; I think you must be aware of this?"

"Assuredly, my dear lord!—assuredly!" replied the perplexed rector. "But I would willingly believe anything possible rather than

that this young man should conduct himself irreverently. It would be bad under any circumstances, but in your lordship's presence!—No, no, it is impossible! The young man knew not what he was about, and, in fact, my lord, he has been so greatly agitated of late, on account of my daughter's alarming illness, that I doubt if he *was* quite aware of what he was about."

"Well, sir, well,—let us hope that we shall see nothing of the same kind for the future. When I become more acquainted with him, it will not be difficult for me to form my judgment upon surer grounds."

Poor Mr. Selcroft trembled from head to foot.

The bishop certainly perceived that his host looked uncomfortable, and it might have been for the purpose of turning the conversation to a more agreeable subject, that his lordship began to speak of the deplorable accounts which had lately reached him of their suffering friend, the worthy rector of Elmland. If this were the object it answered completely, for the meek eyes of Mr. Selcroft were raised

to the face of his patron, with a look of such ineffable love and reverence, that it was really affecting. And then he said, pushing a pretty cut-glass bowl of brandy cherries towards him, "Take one or two of these, my dear lord,—they will do you good. You must not let your kind heart dwell too intently on the melancholy condition of our poor friend. Let us hope that, though his malady is dangerous, it may not be one of great suffering."

"Yes, we will hope so!" replied the bishop, depositing his cherry-stones neatly on the edge of his plate, "we will hope so, my good sir; but dangerous it is, beyond the reach of art. It is painful to lose a useful shepherd from the fold, but there is comfort in reflecting that, in appointing his successor, the beneficial power of choosing a fitting one is vested in us. And now let us join the ladies. I am anxious to see my amiable young friend, Miss Louisa."

CHAPTER XIV.

His lordship was really a good deal startled at perceiving the change which Louisa's severe illness had made in her. Her beauty indeed could scarcely be said to be impaired by it, for it would be difficult to imagine anything more delicately lovely than her appearance, yet still it was impossible not to perceive that, though she looked superlatively happy, and declared herself to be perfectly well, there was a good deal of alarming weakness and languor about her. She had made Henry promise before the bishop entered, that he would give up his seat by her sofa, for, as she confessed to her sister Lucy, the idea of being made love to in the

presence of the bishop, was more than she could bear. Henry kept his word, and the bishop himself having taken the vacant chair, conversed with her very condescendingly for several minutes, concluding the flattering colloquy by saying,—"But we must not have you fatigued, my dear young lady; I do not think I must let you talk any more just at present."

And so saying, he walked across the room to a table at which Henry was sitting with a book in his hand. "What are your studies, Mr. Harley?" said he, holding out his hand for the book, much as a watchful mama might have done who was making the same inquiry of her daughter.

Henry looked a little surprised, but bowed slightly, and put the book into his hand.

The book was a volume of recently published sermons, and it would have been difficult, on that occasion, to have found any book in the room which was not of a religious character; everything was put in good order at Barton Rectory when the Bishop of M—— was expected to dine and sleep there.

Henry was seated at the table, the bishop was standing beside it; but he now dropped into a chair, and still holding the clerical volume in his hand, condescendingly commenced a dissertation, not upon its contents, but upon the somewhat wider field of Christian worship in general, with a running commentary on the one only true, righteous, holy, and effective form of it, as practised by the Episcopal Church Calvinists of England.

His lordship's manner was authoritative and dogmatical in the highest degree, a tone never very palatable, but particularly the reverse, perhaps, to a young man of Harley's meditative and philosophical turn of mind. His lordship's style was, moreover, as stale and flat as it was pompous, and the young man was so desperately bored by the steady prosing of the old one, Louisa, too, being actually hid from his view by the broad shoulders of his reverend lordship, that nothing but the fact of his having been made thoroughly aware of the immense veneration in which the prelate was held by the Selcroft family, prevented his starting up, and walking

out of the room, in order to bring his wearisome penance to an end.

But this consciousness of the family feeling restrained him, and the bishop went on and on, and Henry sat, and sat, finding his only consolation in cutting open, with Louisa's mother-of-pearl paper-knife, the pages of a low church review.

The bishop would have thought him a more graceful, and, perhaps, a more intelligent listener, had he seen the young man's eyes fixed upon him as he spoke, but he considerately remembered that grace does not abound equally in all hearts or all heads; nor did he forget that the young gentleman possessed twelve thousand a-year; a circumstance which certainly ought to make a difference, because —— In short, it *must* make a difference, for a multitude of reasons, too many for a bishop to feel himself called upon to enumerate, even if not engaged in uttering a very energetic discourse; which, though uttered *sotto voce*, and solely for the benefit of the young gentleman to whom it was addressed, very fully employed the faculties of the speaker.

And so they went on, inexpressibly to the satisfaction of Mr. Selcroft, who, although he appeared to be greatly occupied in whispering to his wife and daughters, and occasionally changing the position of Louisa's pillows, failed not to mark with the deepest attention what was going on at the opposite side of the room. He was quite sure the bishop was "about it," and he was quite sure also, that if Harley had shown any sign of impatience, or still more, if he had given the slightest token of anti-evangelical opinions, that heavy stream of smooth though densely turbid eloquence would either have stopped short altogether, or so vehemently have changed its character as to have startled them all.

But alas! for the uncertainty of all human things! Alas! for the vanity of all human hopes!

Henry had listened thus patiently to the Bishop of M——, solely because he *was* the Bishop of M——, and he had screwed his courage to a pitch that would have enabled him to go on cutting the leaves of the review for a good while longer, without displaying any outward

signs of his inward annoyance, had the bishop been reasonable enough to content himself with being listened to.

But most unfortunately a strange whim seized upon him, and he thought he should like to hear the owner of Harley Court say something that might testify the effect which his eloquence had produced upon him.

No such idea as this would have entered his head upon ordinary occasions, for he knew, as well as any man living, that a bishop ought not to be answered. But though remembering little, and esteeming less, all influence and all opinions save such as he called scriptural, it came into his head at that unlucky moment, that before he gave his consent to the marriage of Selcroft's daughter, he should like to feel certain that the young man's notions upon the subject of religion were of the right sort.

"A man with twelve thousand a-year," thought he, as he paused for a moment to blow his nose, "a man with twelve thousand a-year may, for what I know, have influence enough in his parish to get a cross, or a crucifix either,

into the church, an abomination which that pretty creature, Louisa Selcroft, ought not to witness, nor shall she if my caution can prevent it."

Having replaced his pocket-handkerchief, and decided upon making his much-vexed young companion speak out, he resumed his discourse by saying, "Nothing can be in better taste, Mr. Harley, than the manner in which you have been pleased to listen to me without hazarding the loss of any of my sentiments by the expression of your own; but your present position in this highly estimable family makes me anxious to feel assured upon the best of all authority, namely, your own statement, my good sir, as to your own views upon the all-important subject of religion. What are your views respecting the great schism which at this moment divides the Church? And first, do you hold, without scruple or reservation, that first, last, and only saving creed of election? Throw off your timidity, my dear sir. Forget that I am a bishop, and tell me, without reserve, what is your opinion on this all-important tenet of our Christian faith?"

The long endurance of Harley seemed to be exhausted by this overwhelming blow. His colour was greatly heightened, and there was a suddenness in the movement with which he rose, which made the bishop start.

"You must excuse me, my lord," he said, "if I frankly confess to your lordship that I should find it no very difficult task, perhaps, to forget that you are a bishop; I should find it less easy, I think, to forget my own littleness than your lordship's greatness. The strangely familiar style in which you are pleased to ask for judgment upon the counsels and decisions of the MOST HIGH, has, however, too obvious a tendency to make me forget my own insignificance, to make it either pleasant or profitable for me to listen to you further, and you must, therefore, excuse me if I withdraw from the discussion." And so saying, he quietly marched to the back of the sofa upon which Louisa was sitting, and, seating himself in a chair beside it, entered into a whispered conversation which his position as her accepted husband rendered perfectly unobjectionable.

For about the space of two minutes the

bishop seemed as immoveable as if he had been shot, and in fact it was a sort of mental shot which he had received, which for that period seemed perfectly to have paralyzed him. But such a self-confiding bishop as the Bishop of M——, is not likely to remain long in such a condition. Having remained tranquil just long enough to feel assured that neither his voice nor movement were likely to betray the emotion he felt, he arose and approached Mr. Selcroft.

"I think it is growing late, my good sir," said he. "I have taken a good deal of exercise to-day, and feel tired. But your comfortable *bishop's chamber*," for so the best bedroom at Barton Rectory was deferentially called, "will soon set me right again."

At the first word that indicated his purpose of retiring, Mr. Selcroft, Mrs. Selcroft, and Miss Lucy Selcroft, all started to their feet, but as a matter of course they did not move an inch till he had finished speaking, as if his words were still more sacred than his will; but when he ceased to speak they all three started off towards the little table that held the night

candles. Lucy, as might be expected, gained the race, and having lighted the *bougie* she had seized upon as she passed those on the chimney-piece, she presented it, with a pretty smile of triumph, to his lordship.

But his lordship was in no mood to return a smile, even from a pretty young lady, and he received the candlestick from her hand without a word or a glance of acknowledgment. Whatever presence of mind was still left him was employed in making Mr. Selcroft understand, by a husky whisper, that he wished, before retiring for the night, to have a few minutes' conversation with him in his study.

And he succeeded perfectly in making Mr. Selcroft understand this, and the consequence was, that the rector of Barton turned as white as a sheet. But his feelings, whatever they were, did not impede his obedience, for without waiting to prepare another bed-candle, he seized one of the lights from the chimney-piece, and hastening to open the door, bowed as his honoured friend passed out, with as much humility as if he himself were a newly ordained curate, and the bishop his rector.

But had his humility and respect assumed an attitude still more humble—had he even bent his knee in reverence, the bishop was in no mood to be propitiated thereby. He stalked stiffly on, and having reached the well-known study door, stood haughtily aside while it was opened for him.

The unfortunate Mr. Selcroft instinctively felt at that moment that Louisa's becoming mistress of Harley Court, and himself rector of Elmland, were two enormous blessings, both within his grasp, but utterly incompatible. Yet even in that painful moment of feverish and horrid thought, the acuteness of his intellect did not forsake him. "At one and the same time, impossible," he murmured inwardly; "but there is a time for all things. Let me be once rector of Elmland, and then ——"

There was no need that his reasonings should go any farther; he understood himself perfectly, and by the time the angry bishop had placed himself in the rectorial arm chair, Mr. Selcroft felt himself perfectly well prepared to listen with composure to anything

and everything that his mitred friend and patron might be about to say.

And it really was fortunate that he had so well prepared himself, for it was in the perfectly unceremonious tone of vehement anger that the said friend and patron thus addressed him:—

"Mr. Selcroft! If there was a single house in all England wherein I should have believed myself safe from personal insult, it was yours!" he began, and his eye flashed, and his lip trembled with passion as he spoke. "But it has proved otherwise, sir. I have been insulted—very grossly—very insolently insulted, and that by a man of whom you have spoken to me in the most affectionate terms, and one to whom it is your intention to give your daughter in marriage."

"Mr. Harley?—Do I understand your lordship rightly?—Mr. Harley has insulted your lordship? Let me believe myself deaf, so that I may believe also that I am mistaken!"

"No, sir, you are not deaf, neither am I. —Had that young scoffer at everything that I hold sacred, spent the whole of his college life

studying an harangue which would be the most offensive possible to a Christian (no matter of what rank) he could not have succeeded better. And this is the man to whom you have thought proper to promise the hand of your daughter in marriage! Such being the facts, Mr. Selcroft, it cannot much surprise you to be told that all connection, all intercourse between us ends here. Were it an hour or two earlier, sir, I would not suffer so offensive an incongruity as my passing a night under the same roof as the individual to whom I have alluded. But this must now be submitted to. For the future I shall be more cautious as to where I lodge myself. And now, sir, farewell; we shall probably never meet again; but before we part there is still one word that I wish to say to you. My duty as a Christian bishop commands it, and every other feeling sinks before this. I have been pained at perceiving the very evidently dangerous state of your youngest daughter's health. You are deceiving yourself in supposing that she is recovering. On the contrary, it is but too evident that the young woman is in a consumption. But this

is a very flattering complaint; and if your ambition to see your daughter make a great marriage be strong enough to induce you to commit so great a sin, you may still have time to accomplish it—for she may live some months. But you shall not accomplish it till you have been told by me that the doing so will be a deadly sin. That man, that Harley, of Harley Court, is an audacious INFIDEL. And now, Sir, I have done my duty. I presume I am to sleep in the room where I washed my hands before dinner, and that I shall find my servant there?"

"Yes, my dear lord! Yes!" cried Mr. Selcroft, starting up with renovated hope and alacrity, and gently placing himself between the bishop and the door,—"But on my bended knee let me implore you to accord me one single moment more!"

"Kneel not, sir!" said the bishop, with a majestic wave of the hand, which restored Mr Selcroft to his feet again. "I see not how it can be possible that you should have anything exculpatory to offer—but I heartily wish it were. Speak, sir!"

"The only *possible* exculpation is mine, my lord!" returned Mr. Selcroft, eagerly, and almost boldly; "and when I pledge you my sacred honour for its truth, I cannot doubt your receiving it. Till this hour, till within the last few moments during which I have been listening to the most painful words I ever heard spoken, I was totally ignorant of the dreadful nature of Mr. Harley's opinions. That such a misery was within the reach of possibility, I had not the very slightest idea! But what your lordship has now told me, will separate us for ever. Can it be necessary that I should *say* this, my dear lord? Have the many years during which I have enjoyed the inestimable advantage of frequent intercourse with the most perfect Christian model of the age left me so destitute of spiritual help as to make me liable to commit so great a sin?"

This speech, and the manner in which it was uttered, produced exactly the effect intended. The bishop was mollified, the man was propitiated.

"Enough, my friend!" he replied, holding out his hand with a look of the most con-

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his brows.

"I am thankful, very t
good Selcroft,"

"It was yourself, my lord!" returned Mr. Selcroft, with enthusiasm. "Piety, wisdom, energy, and gentle goodness to a faithful friend, all join to mark the act as yours, and yours only!"

And the hoping, happy Rector of Barton *cum* Elmland actually went the length of seizing the bishop's hand, and pressing his lips upon it.

His lordship looked pleased, and touched. Most men, it is probable, would have been pleased at having a feeling of wounded vanity and benighted intolerance, joined to the most unfeeling cruelty towards a sickly, innocent girl, for whom he professed a paternal regard; most men, under such circumstances, would have felt soothed by such a burst of affectionate enthusiasm, and so well pleased was the Bishop of M——, that, as he passed through the door of the study on his way to bed, he distinctly said, "Your conduct has been admirable, my dear Selcroft. It is a comfort to me to think that I shall have a man at Elmland, which is a very important parish, in whom I can put such entire confidence."

CHAPTER XV.

AND did Mr. Selcroft too go to bed and to sleep with a plot upon his conscience, the first victim of which was to be his darling child? Did he really intend to obtain the fat tithes of Elmland by tearing her from the man she loved, and thereby risking the life which he had just been assured hung by so slender a thread?

Most assuredly Mr. Selcroft had no such desperate wickedness in his thoughts, and so far was he from intending to injure his darling Louisa in order to obtain the preferment he so greatly desired to possess, that probably no motive less powerful than his ardent desire to improve the worldly circumstances of all his race, could

have enabled him to conceal the really profound aversion with which the conduct of his right reverend patron had inspired him.

All that can be said against him on the present occasion is, that the patronized rector was of the same school as the patronizing bishop.

And it was for this very reason that the rector, notwithstanding the puzzling entanglement of his affairs, went to bed, and slept soundly.

Respecting the state of Louisa's health, in the first place he had much better ground for believing that she was in no danger of consumption, than the bishop had for believing the contrary. Two physicians of the highest eminence, had examined her with all that accuracy of science which in our days is so almost constantly found to be unfailing, and both had declared that she had no bad symptoms whatever. That this judgment, delivered only on the previous day, had occasioned the greatest joy to her father, mother, and sister, may easily be imagined; but the fact that such an examination had been made, had

CHAPTER XV.

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never been communicated to Mr. Harley; Mr. Selcroft not wishing to suggest to him that any fears of the kind had ever been entertained. Superlatively well pleased, and immeasurably relieved, however, as Mr. Selcroft felt himself from the result of this admirably well-managed interview, he nevertheless passed rather a wakeful night; and in truth he had enough to think of, and enough to arrange, in order to get safely along the somewhat intricate, though very promising, path which was to lead him to the goal at which he desired to arrive. Mr. Selcroft, amidst many plans for the advancement of himself and his family, had at this time two, which, in his estimation, outweighed in importance all the rest a thousand times over. The first of these was the obtaining the living of Elmland for himself; the other, was the obtaining the hand of Mr. Harley for his daughter.

He now felt that he had the comfort of knowing, to a certainty, that he might be sure of one of these, but this did not content him; and he confessed to his own heart that he never should be perfectly contented unless he

obtained both. This seeming incompatibility perhaps, only stimulated his ingenuity and his perseverance the more.

Many devices had suggested themselves before he went to sleep, but the last that occurred to him not only pleased him so well as speedily to soothe him into slumber, but was so congenial to his spirit that it positively ripened as he slept; and when he awoke in the morning, he felt that he had no longer any need of meditation, and that all that was required of him was a resolute will that should yield itself to no opposition whatever.

The first thing necessary was, that he should have a secret and perfectly decisive conversation with his wife. He did not know her, perhaps, quite as thoroughly as she knew him, but long experience had given him the comfortable assurance that he should receive no active opposition from her, whether she approved his measures or not; provided that he took care to make her understand that it was her vowed obedience that he demanded of her, and not her approbation.

He had not been many minutes awake him-

self, when he awoke her too, and begging she would immediately dress herself, gav to understand that he required all her a tion to the business upon which he was to consult her.

On parting from the bishop the prec night, he had found his lady already asleep, and feeling extremely fatigued hi he forbore to disturb her. But now her were no sooner fully opened than he l his important disclosures :

"Of course," said he, "you know no than I do what passed between the b and Harley during that long confabul they had together in the drawing-room night?"

"No, indeed, my dear," she replied, I. Louisa fell fast asleep, and I belie dozed too ; and when I opened my eyes a Lucy was gone, Louisa, dear creature, talking to Harley, and you in the act o companying the bishop to his room,—an Mr. Harley only staid a very few mi while he was wishing our poor dear invalid night, I had no opportunity of knowing thing."

"Accompanying the bishop to his room!" returned Mr. Selcroft, with an expressive, but to his wife a most unintelligible grimace. "No, my dear," he added, "it was the bishop who accompanied me to my study, at his own particular request, and when he had got me there, a pretty pastoral lecture he gave me, I promise you."

"What do you mean, Mr. Selcroft? Was the bishop displeased at any thing?" said the lady, anxiously.

"Displeased!" returned her husband, repeating the grimace. "But we have no time for describing all that, nor does it signify a farthing. All that does signify is, that his lordship told me he had found out that Harley was an infidel; and then he made it very clearly intelligible to the meanest capacity, that if I did not immediately break off the match, he should immediately find a more fitting successor than my sinful self for our dropsical friend at Elmland."

"Good Heaven, Mr. Selcroft! and you speak this jokingly? What on earth is to become of us? To break off Louisa's match

is impossible. It would kill her! I am quite positive it would kill her!" cried Mrs. Selcroft in very genuine agony.

"And what is to keep me alive, my dear, if I lose Elmland? You forget, perhaps, the condition of my banker's book, and of my wine merchant's bill, besides a few other little documents of the same nature?"

"No, Mr. Selcroft, I forget nothing," she replied. "But, thank God, I remember your love for our sweet Louisa too well to believe for an instant that you would sacrifice her precious life as a peace-offering to that odious bishop."

Mr. Selcroft frowned, and held up a warning finger at hearing this bold impiety; but he half smiled at the same time, and taking the two hands of his trembling wife in his, he said, "You are quite right, my dear, in thinking that I should not like to run any risk of killing my Louisa, or even of spoiling her fortune, in order to punish Harley for talking nonsense to a bishop, or in order to atone to the said bishop for having listened to it; but neither do I intend, my dear Mrs.

Selcroft, to be arrested in my rectory parlour and carried to prison; and I can tell you, that to steer clear of both requires some skill. That God has been pleased to endow me with such skill I do believe, and I hope I am duly thankful for the same,—too thankful, (observe what I say, good wife,)—a great deal too thankful to permit such a precious gift to be lost, and thrown away to please any mortal man, or woman either. Do you understand me, my dear?"

"Yes, Mr. Selcroft," she replied, with an almost inaudible little sigh, "I understand that you mean to do whatever you think proper, without attending to the opinion of any one. And all I can say in reply is, that I am quite aware that now, as always, it is my duty not to oppose you. And I am ready to promise this now, without even giving you the trouble of listening to a single word of mine, if *you* will only promise not to do anything that may endanger Louisa's health."

"It is a bargain, my dear," he replied, "and I do hereby promise that I will do nothing that shall endanger her health. But

on the other hand, I do, and must requir(the most implicit obedience from you all, i return."

Mr. Selcroft then went on to inform her which he did very explicitly, that he had already promised the bishop that the marriage between Mr. Harley and Louisa should be broken off, and also that the bishop had unequivocally promised him in return that he should succeed to the rectory of Elmland, a soon as its present dying incumbent was n more.

"Now the fact is, my dear Mrs. Selcroft," continued her husband, "that the bishop ha no right to make any such condition with me He has no right to make any condition what ever. It is a clear case of simony on hi part, it is bribery and corruption of the ver worst description. The bishop, you see, m dear, is in a passion, and he is offering m a bribe to avenge him. Now, as I am not o the order of Jesuits—God forbid!—he has n right to exact such obedience from me. know but of one law, both human and divine which enforces absolute obedience, and tha

as you are aware, is the matrimonial law. 'Wives, obey your husbands!' is a clear and distinct command which has never been rescinded, and which of course never will be as long as the lawgivers of the world continue to be men in possession of their reason. But this is clearly a diamond-cut-diamond case, and without indicting the Bishop of M—— either for simony or conspiracy, I flatter myself I shall be perfectly able to arrange everything to our hearts' content, and if I should ever, at any future time, find his lordship disposed to be troublesome, I should have no difficulty in making his said lordship understand that he had put himself very greatly in my power."

"And Louisa?" said the mother anxiously. "You know, Mr. Selcroft, that she is still very weak, although the opinion of the physicians is so favourable."

"Quite true, Mrs. Selcroft, and her weakness shall be cared for. But remember, if you please, that this opinion of the physicians is not to be made a matter of gossip with any one. I have very particular reasons for not

Mrs. Selcroft meekly bent he
was well understood between the
a promise of obedience, and
were too well kept by her to mak
for her husband to require any o

CHAPTER XVI.

.T would be tedious were I to follow Mr. croft step by step, through all the clever le manœuvrings by which he managed this ·icate affair. At some points he found re difficulty, at others less, than he ex- ·ted. His most difficult scene was with isa, who really was still so weak and deli- e as to make caution necessary, and yet it s to her, and to her only, that it was essary that he should explain the whole air exactly as it really stood.

Immediately after the bishop's departure, o, under pretence of a slight indisposition, ok his breakfast in his own little dressing-

room, in order to avoid encountering Mr. Harley, Louisa was told that her father wished to speak to her, alone, before she exchanged the sofa in her mother's room for that in the drawing-room. But this announcement alarmed her not; she thought, pretty creature, that it was only some little paternal bit of gallantry and fondness concerning the wedding present he had been talking of.

His very grave face soon showed that she was mistaken in this conjecture; but nevertheless she was enabled to listen with good courage to the strange and startling tale he had to tell, by the consolatory nature of the preface which he had prefixed to it.

"My dear Louisa," he began, "it is absolutely necessary that I make you understand *at once* that the chief object of the little plan that I am about to explain to you, is to secure your marriage with your justly loved Henry beyond the power of any one; and I begin by telling you this at once, in order to set your heart at rest upon the point that must naturally be more interesting to you than any other."

"Thank you, my dear, dearest papa!" cried Louisa fervently. "You may tell me anything you like now, and be very sure that I shall listen to it like a heroine."

"I was sure it would be so, my dear girl," he replied, "and it is for that reason that I have arranged everything with a view to insure to you this first wish of your heart. And now, my love, I must tell you many things which you will listen to with less pleasure, but they will, I know, all appear trifling in your estimation after the promise I have given you, that you shall not be separated from Henry. But you will find as I go on, that this promise cannot be kept without considerable sacrifices on my part, and on your own, too."

"How so, papa?" said Louisa, anxiously. "Sacrifices, papa? of what kind?"

"You will soon understand me, if you will listen patiently," he replied. "Last night the bishop took it into his head to examine and cross-examine poor Harley upon his religious faith. I cannot repeat any part of their con-

ship was about to retire for the
gave me to understand that he firs
speak privately to me in my st
guess my dismay, Louisa, when, as
got me there, he began most vel
assure me that Mr. Harley was a
infidel, and that no consideration
must induce me to permit you
him."

"But you won't listen to him
dearest papa!" said Louisa, clasping
in the most violent agitation, "a
and trust that you had the courage
so at once."

"It would have required litt
Louisa, to have told his hot-head
that I differed from him totally

Louisa, who herself appeared to be greatly struck by this argument.

"I might have done so, my dear, had not his lordship cut all argument short by coolly giving me to understand that if I did not immediately break off the match, *he* should immediately find another successor to supply the place of our poor friend at Elmland."

"And even this did not shake you, my dear dearest papa," exclaimed Louisa, her pale face becoming crimson with the vehemence of her emotion.

"Nothing could shake me, my child, on a question that so nearly concerned your happiness. But I have told you that we must make some sacrifices, and ——"

"Oh, papa! you need not go on! It is an immense sacrifice, I know it is! The giving up Elmland is an immense sacrifice!" sobbed Louisa.

"Do not agitate yourself, my dear child, but listen to me, Louisa. Listen to me quietly, and then you will understand the importance of what I am saying to you," he resumed.

"The fact is, my dear child, that there are

more ways than one by which an intended marriage may be broken off."

Here poor Louisa was seized with a violent trembling fit.

"But your marriage shall not be broken unless it be by your own fault. You are already aware, my dear child—alas! we are all only too well aware that my money affairs are in a very embarrassed condition. Perhaps a clergyman, as much devoted to his duties as I am, is more likely to suffer from such a cause than any one else. But be this as it may, such is the fact, my Louisa, and nothing but the well-founded hope of becoming rector of Elmland has enabled me thus long to struggle against the difficulties that surround me."

"Poor dear papa!" sobbed Louisa.

"Yes, dear love, you may indeed pity me, and the more because unhappily I cannot suffer alone. If I could, believe me, I should think very little of it. No one knows better than I do that this world is intended to be a scene of suffering, and my hopes are placed beyond it! But to return to what I was

saying. It is absolutely necessary that at this critical moment I should confess to you that I am living in hourly dread of having an execution served in my rectory house, and of being myself arrested and conveyed to prison. The only thing which has for some weeks delayed this catastrophe, has been the generally received belief that I was to have Elmland. I leave you therefore to guess what the effect of its being given to another is likely—no, not likely—is *certain* to be. Nor let us deceive ourselves, my child, as to the effect which my being sent to prison for debt, must have upon *your* future prospects. The attachment of Mr. Harley might be proof, perhaps, even against this, did he stand alone in the world; but a man of his rank and fortune, Louisa, has many duties to fulfil, and however strangely my own interest, or rather yours, my poor child, may bribe me to think otherwise, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that a man so highly connected, and having, as it were, the destiny of an unmarried sister in his hands, I cannot but see and feel that he would hardly be justified in marrying the

daughter of a man who had been arrested his own parsonage for debt, and was likely end his days in a jail."

Louisa clasped her hands, and uttered deep groan.

"But all this may be avoided, Louisa, you will but have the courage and firmness t act as I would have you."

"Say, say what, papa!—I am ready to do anything!"

"The only mode of getting out of this dreadful dilemma, is this. You must let me write a letter to Henry, telling him that we are greatly alarmed for your health, and therefore that your marriage must be postponed till we have a stronger assurance than we can feel at present of your ultimate recovery. This will at once set all right with the bishop; and as every day brings us worse and worse accounts of poor Broughton, we may be very sure that in the course of a week or ten days the melancholy scene will be closed at Elmland; and then there cannot be the slightest doubt but that the bishop, eager to show his approval of my obedience, will lose no time

in fulfilling the promise he has made me; and once rector of Elmland, my darling, it will not be long, trust me, ere you and your Henry are made man and wife at its altar."

Louisa listened with almost breathless attention to the whole of this speech, and at the end of it, she leant her forehead upon her closed hands, and after remaining silent for several minutes, exclaimed, "You will let me see him first, papa?"

"No, Louisa! no!" replied her father, with a species of firmness in his tone which she knew by experience barred all pleading, and therefore she burst into tears.

"Follow your own course, then," said he, rising. "The consequences will probably be equally fatal to you, and to me . . . . But you will find, when it is too late, poor child, that my being sent to jail will not hasten your marriage much." And with these words he turned to leave the room.

"Oh, stay, papa! stay but one moment longer, and I will promise everything!"

"Do you believe, Louisa, that I wish you should marry Mr. Harley, or that I do not

wish it ?" said he, turning back, and standing opposite to her.

"Oh ! I am quite sure that you wish it !" said she ; and as she said it, she remembered the many little stratagems by which he had contrived to throw them together at Killarney.

"And which of the two, think you, my dear, you or I, are likely to find out the best way of bringing it about ?"

"Oh, you, papa ! a thousand times !" said Louisa, fervently.

"I think so too, Louisa," he quietly replied; "and if you think you can trust me, my love, make up your mind to tell me so at once. For there is no time to lose. The whole business may be got through, dearest, marriage and all, within a month ; but much less time will be necessary to ruin both your hopes and mine for ever."

"I leave everything in your hands, my dearest father !" said Louisa, trembling from head to foot like an aspen leaf.

"You shall not repent your trustfulness, my child !" replied her father, solemnly. "But

remember that I have explained my purpose to *you only*. Danger of every kind might ensue did either your mother or Lucy comprehend my object. Remember this, Louisa, if you wish this object to succeed. To Lucy I have said nothing, no, not a single syllable relative either to the bishop or to Harley. And all your mother knows is, that the bishop has insisted on the dismissal of Harley, and that the ruin which must follow my offending him will oblige me to comply with his wish. All that you have to do is to be silent, and sad, and very poorly."

"I understand! oh, I understand perfectly. And what is there I would not do, rather than spoil a plot that is to have such an ending? Good bye, dear, dearest papa! I know that you can do whatever you will with every body, and thinking of *that* shall give me courage. Say one little word about my love for him in your letter, if you think it will do no mischief."

And then they parted; Louisa rejoicing that her part was only to be silent, and sad,

which she felt suited her better than a other would have done; and her fath equally well pleased at the excellent chance saw before him of outwitting more de friends than one.

CHAPTER XVII.

Not quite an hour had elapsed after this meeting between the father and daughter, when the following letter was dispatched to Mr. Harley:—

"My dear Harley,

"It is with a heavy heart that I now take up my pen to address you, and trust me it is the heavier from knowing that I am about to inflict as much pain as I feel. My sweet Louisa is very ill! Alas! she is so ill, Harley, as to make me feel that at the present moment it is my duty to rescind the consent to your marriage, which I so freely, so

joyfully gave at Killarney. You must, I think, by this time, my dear Harley, be aware how completely everything I say, think, and do, is regulated by religious principle, and you will therefore, I know, feel more disposed to submit to the line of conduct which I advise on this sad occasion than you might be, were it dictated by one less deserving your confidence. What I now allude to is the necessity, according to my opinion, of your not taking leave of my poor girl. Her attachment to you is so strong, that it is impossible to say what the consequence of so agitating an interview might be, neither do I wish that we should any of us be pained by uttering adieus that could only tend to increase the pain of parting. Accept then, now, a most affectionate farewell from us all! God bless you, my dear son! for as a son my heart will ever consider you.

"Ever and always,

"Most affectionately yours,

"WILLIAM SELCROFT."

Had this letter been received by Mr. Har-

ley before his having ever seen the Bishop of M——, his feelings upon the perusal of it would have been very different. He was conscious that he had suffered his distaste for the prelate's doctrine, sentiments, and manners, to betray him into something a little approaching uncivil warmth in his manner of replying to him in the preceding evening, and he was conscious, too, that the bishop had felt and resented this vehemently. He knew also, from having heard the voices of both, as he passed the study door in going to his bed-room, that the bishop and the rector had not retired to rest without having first sat in judgment on him and his heresies. That this dismissal was the result of that judgment he felt perfectly sure, and his indignation was so great as almost to overpower every other sentiment. To the letter he determined to send no answer whatever. In fact it neither required nor asked for any. His heart ached sharply for a moment as he thought of poor Louisa and her undoubted attachment to him, and could she have seen the tear that rose to his eye as he murmured, "Poor dear Louisa! Poor

dear girl!" she must have been flattered, though she would not have been consoled by it.

Harley's resolution was soon taken, and his plans arranged. He determined upon immediately returning to Harley Court, with the hope of persuading his aunt and his sister to go abroad with him. Though much too angry at the manner in which he had been treated not to feel some consolation for the loss of the beautiful girl from whom he was so unfeelingly separated, in the thought that he was also separated from her false and fanatical father for ever, it was impossible for him to countermand all the orders he had given for the decoration of the loveliest form he had ever looked upon, without some sad and very painful emotions.

Of her increased illness he did not believe one single word, and this was doubly a comfort to him, for it not only left him free from all the tender sorrow which such an idea must inevitably have produced, but it very greatly added to his rejoicings, that the man who had imagined such a device would never be his

father-in-law. The firmness of his conviction, that this alleged cause for his dismissal was not the real one, was very reasonably increased by the certainty he felt, that if Louisa were dying, neither her mother, nor the more self-willed Lucy, would have permitted her last hours to be made wretched, by his being driven from her so harshly.

His sudden reappearance at Harley Court occasioned a very unequivocal avowal of satisfaction from both ladies, notwithstanding the seemingly mortifying fact, that he returned to them a rejected man.

Till he saw how very brightly the dark eyes of his sister Fanny sparkled, and how very expressively well-pleased was the smile of his aunt, he was not aware how much of the gentle acquiescence to his wishes and his will, with which the announcement of his engagement had been received, was due to their wish not to give him pain.

"It will be offering my thanks for your gracious manner in receiving the news of my intended marriage at rather an odd time," said he, smiling, "but really they are due, for

it is perfectly evident *now*, that you could n[illegible] have been very greatly delighted then."

Lady Frances looked at Fanny, and Fan[illegible] looked at Lady Frances, and both smiled.—"Delighted? No, I don't think that we cou[illegible] honestly say we were delighted, Harley," sai[illegible] Lady Frances.

"Then why did you not make some objec[illegible]tion, some observation against it?" said he.

"Because it was decidedly much better that we should not," replied his aunt.

"If ever mortal man was free to choose a wife, it is yourself, Henry," said his sister with decision, "and such being our joint conviction, it would not have been either very gracious or very wise, if we had received the intelligence that your choice was made, either with the intention or the wish to oppose it."

"Your conduct was not only wise, but very kind," replied Henry affectionately. "But now it is all over," he added, "do tell me what it was that made the idea of this marriage distasteful to you?"

"That is a difficult question," replied Fanny, laughing, "is it not, Aunt Frances?"

"Not only difficult," replied her ladyship, "but, as far as I am concerned, it is impossible to answer it. I am sure I cannot tell you, Harley, why it was that Fanny and I thought you would not be so happy as you expected, but somehow or other we did think it."

"Perhaps, Aunt Frances, your aristocratic feelings led you to fancy that the daughter of a country clergyman was not good enough for me?"

"No, I do not think that had anything to do with it. Do you think it had, Fanny?"

"No," said Fanny in her turn, "I am quite sure it had not, because we never said to each other, 'I think Henry might have done better, or might have formed a more advantageous connexion,' but only that we doubted very much whether it would answer."

"Answer?—What does that mean, Fanny?" said her brother. "Did you think I was going to make a money speculation?"

"No; I believe, Henry, that we meant intellectually."

"My dear Fanny! that is too ridiculous!"

exclaimed Henry, laughing, but evidently little piqued.—"What could you know a poor dear Louisa's intellect?"

"*Nothing*," replied Fanny Harley, rather pointedly.

Henry felt the full force of the word she had used, and was silenced; upon which Lady Frances, who was too well contented with the present state of affairs to feel any wish of being severe on what was past, said gaily, "I must confess one thing, Harley, for, notwithstanding all the good behaviour you give us credit for, it is very certain that we have been guilty of one great injustice; and to confess the truth honestly, both Fanny and I very strongly suspected your reverend father-in-law that was to have been, of having done a good deal, or at least everything in his power, to promote this great match for his daughter: and now, if you are right in your suspicion that this dangerous illness is a mere pretence and that he has broken it off merely to please his old friend the bishop, he must at once stand acquitted of mercenary views, and, of the two. I should think better of a man who was

honestly, that is sincerely, fanatical, than of one who plotted to marry a daughter to a rich man, merely because he was so."

Henry said he agreed with her; but there he let the subject drop, for in his heart he believed that Mr. Selcroft, for whom he certainly entertained no slight degree of dislike, was at the very least as much devoted to his own interest as to his own faith; nevertheless, if not shaken in his opinion, he was at least puzzled by his conduct in the present instance. He felt the full force of Lady Frances's remark, and was greatly at a loss to divine in what manner the bishop's influence could have been used, in order to make him give up a connexion which he had very evidently been extremely anxious to promote.

Had he ever heard of Elmland, he might have understood it better. Henry's prescription for himself of a tour on the continent with his aunt and sister, as a cure for the painful interruption which these events had caused in his hitherto very happy and tranquil life, was a most wise one. The very preparation for it

did him a world of good, and the very
delight which the proposition occasi
both the ladies did much towards per
him that he ought not to quarrel
destiny.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BEFORE we follow the rejected Henry to the Pyrenees, which, as the most picturesque scenery he could think of to exhibit to his untravelled companions, he had decided should be his (not very direct) route to Rome, we must see what success attended the manœuverings of Mr. Selcroft. It is unnecessary to give in detail the interview between him and the bishop, which, owing to the engagements of the latter, did not take place till Mr. Selcroft had the exceedingly great gratification of carrying with him a newspaper announcing the departure of Mr. Harley, of Harley Court, for the continent.

ance," and gave him the m
quivocal promise he had
effect that the living of Elm
as soon as it pleased Heav
Broughton from his sufferin

And with this promise th
returned to the bosom of h
as any rector could be wh
longer to wait before the pr
is actually fulfilled.

Meanwhile the Lady Fra
her particularly happy niece
joying all the delightful
attends the preparations for
foreign land. In addition to
ley had a source of pleasu
contented to enjoy without

was the fact.—Yet Fanny Harley was not a selfish, narrow-minded thing, frightened at the idea that any one she loved, should love, or be loved by another. On the contrary, she had for years been nursing the hope that Henry, instead of being a wealthy, handsome young man of fashion about town, should marry early—the earlier the better, provided he could find a woman worthy of him.

Nor was the worthiness she dreamed of made up of all sorts of rare perfections, so difficult to find, as to make the wish an idle speculation. It was not likely that he should fall in love with an ugly or a vulgar woman, neither did she fear that he would select an uneducated one; so on these points she had no anxiety: but she had set her heart on his marrying a woman of high intellect, for she felt perfectly sure that without this no woman could make him happy, or be made happy by him. No one knew Henry Harley so well as his sister. His aunt, indeed, had a very clear and very correct idea of his general character, appreciated his fine intellect very justly, and understood, valued, and loved his moral worth.

But she did not know, as his sister did, ho absolutely necessary to his well-being was th companionship of a mind in sympathy wit his own. Of the mind of Louisa Selcroft, sh certainly, as Henry had very truly observe knew nothing. But she was deeply convince that, had that mind been such a one as *h* required for companionship, she should no have been left ignorant of the fact.

This it was which caused her to feel so de lightful a sensation of relief, on learning tha this hastily formed engagement was broken of And in this feeling Lady Frances most heartil joined, because she received with faith the in terpretation which Fanny put upon the stres that had been laid upon the beauty and sweet ness of Louisa in every letter Henry had writ ten to them since he had formed the engage ment, as well as on his pretty, nearly tota silence as to all her other qualities. But t this part of the subject they neither of then even alluded again; nor indeed did either o the trio seem to think that any further discus sion of this short episode in Henry's life wa desirable; so that in leaving England the

appeared very literally to leave the memory of it behind them.

The autumn was in all its many-coloured glory as they travelled through France; but France is not the country in which this brilliant drapery is exhibited to the greatest advantage, and Henry had began to feel that he was making his companions pay a heavy tax for the beauty of the Pyrenees, by the long, long journey which led to it. But who, on arriving at Pau, can feel that this tax was too heavy? And who can complain of going farther still, when the doing so exhibits to them such scenes as both basses and hautes Pyrenees have to show? They dived into every obscure valley that they found nestling among the very roots of the mountains, and with unwearying activity climbed, despite rocks and even snow itself, to their very summits, well rewarded by finding themselves in a new world, where the feeling of terror itself was often converted into delight, by the novelty as well as the sublimity of what they looked upon.

But there was another long journey to be made before reaching Rome, which they had

fixed upon as their winter quarters, and m
than once the time for their departure h
been fixed, and more than once postponed
order to permit their making some new exc
sion, too tempting to be left unenjoyed.
length, however, Henry began to remonstr
very gravely against any further delays,
there were several celebrated spots where
meant to linger on the way. Toulouse, Mo
pelier, and Nice, must all be looked at, and
beautiful Corniche road enjoyed, before win
had absolutely overtaken them.

And could Genoa and her marble palaces
left unseen? Or Pisa, with her sacred Com
Santo? Or could Florence, the fairest city
the earth, girt in by her villa-covered mo
tains, gemmed by her domes and towers, a
richer than all the world besides in the tr
sury of pictures—was she to be passed
unexplored, because the English ladies decla
that nothing but snow-covered peaks could
sublime enough for their fancy? Henry p
tively scolded, declaring that the task of driv
them far exceeded in difficulty anything
had ever before attempted. At length, h

ever, a compromise was made; the two ladies promising that, if Henry would indulge them with one ascent to the tip-top of their favorite Pic du Midi, they would ask for no more, but faithfully set out with him on their onward course the day after.

The days had already shortened so considerably as to render it necessary for them to start early in the morning from their quarters at the Eaux Chaudes, in order to accomplish this excursion before night-fall. Nothing could appear more favourable than the state of the weather at setting out, and the trio were in the highest spirits, and seemed determined that this last excursion should, if possible, be more enjoyed than any which had gone before it. They were mounted on horses of the country accustomed to the track they had to follow, and attended by guides who were well used to the employment.

They had very nearly accomplished the ascent, when one of the guides told Mr. Harley that there were symptoms of an approaching change of weather.

"Do you mean to say that we had better not go on?" said Henry.

"Certainly, monsieur, you had better not go on," replied the man.

The two ladies, with another and a younger guide, were in the van, and it was evident that their attendant had either not remarked the atmospheric symptoms which had alarmed his companion, or that he had not thought them sufficiently alarming to be mentioned.

Henry immediately rode forward, and communicated the warning which he had received, which was too unwelcome, both to his sister and his aunt, to be listened to with very great attention.

"Nonsense, Henry!" exclaimed Fanny, contemptuously, and at the same time using her whip so as to move on more rapidly.

"Do not go on, Lady Frances!" said he, addressing his aunt. "If you will turn back, Fanny must turn too. She is too much excited now to comprehend the importance of the caution that has been given, and it will be better for you to lead, than for me to reason with her."

"But, my dear Harley," returned Lady Frances, laughing, "I am of her faction my-

self. I do not see the slightest necessity for our turning back. I feel that it is a little colder than it was, that's all—and the reason for this, of course, is that we are drawing near the summit, where the snow is deeper and where there is no higher land to give a shelter from the wind. Of course, Harley, the weather will appear rougher here than it does lower down the mountain. But this young man does not appear to see any cause for alarm. Pray let us go on. We have set our hearts upon seeing this view."

"I should be very sorry, dear Lady Frances, that any cowardly feelings on my part should prevent you enjoying this pleasure. But let us halt for a moment, and call a council.—Halt there, Fanny! I want to speak to you!" Thus summoned, the wilful Fanny drew in her bridle and stopped her horse.

"Now then!" said Henry, as soon as the three horses, and the two pedestrian guides had all stopped, and all stood as closely together as the nature of the ground would permit. "Now then, let us hear what is to be said for and against our going on. What do you

think about it, young sir?" he continued, addressing the younger guide. "What do you think of the weather?"

"I don't see anything to stop a man, or a woman either, that has got the will and the courage to go on," he replied; "but old men that are past their work would do better to stay at home, than come out merely to spoil sport, and injure the trade for younger men," was the reply.

"And what do you say, my friend?" said Henry, addressing the man who had given him the warning.

"I say, monsieur, that you had better go back," replied the man.

"Should you be afraid to proceed yourself, if you were alone?" demanded Henry.

"No, monsieur, I should not," was his answer.

"Then on with you, my good fellow," replied Henry. "You don't know what courageous creatures English women are."

"As you please, monsieur. It may be that we shall get safe up, and safe down again."

Upon this the cavalcade moved on, the two

guides walking closely beside the two ladies, and Mr. Harley in the rear.

In this manner they went on up the now very steep ascent for about half a mile farther, the elder guide continuing to look from time to time, with evident anxiety, towards the heavens, and the younger one stepping boldly on without appearing to think that any such examination was worth his notice.

"This is the shed where you must dismount," said both the guides at once.

"So much the better!" cried Lady Frances. "I had much rather walk than ride up such a very steep path."

"You had better go back, madame," said the elder guide, stopping her horse, but in an attitude that rather impeded than assisted her dismounting. But the lady was wilful, and without betraying any want or wish for assistance, was immediately upon her feet. Henry, meanwhile, had dismounted also, and was now assisting his sister to do the same.

"The horses will remain in the shed till our return," said he. "It takes about an

hour, does it not, to go from henc
summit, and return?"

"It is not for me to pretend to
how long it may take you to do it, j
replied the elder guide. "If, as I ex
snow should overtake you, your time
might be rather uncertain."

"But you must know every path
mountain by heart, my good friend,"
Henry; "and if so, it is not a showe
that would make you lose your way."

"If you had ever watched a fa
mountains, monsieur," replied the m
would not say that. Lower down
there are land marks that we all
heart, as you say, but when you h
the next turn you get to an ugly b
there are deep hollows on both side
the snow comes thick enough, and fas
to cover the stepping-stones, there is
man living that could honestly und
guide any body surely."

"You would not have said that
years ago, Louis, nor ten either,

said the younger guide, with a smile, and a knowing shake of the head; "but the courage is gone out of you, my man, and your best place now is the chimney-corner. There are plenty of younger ones ready to take your place."

"I know it," replied old Louis, quietly. "But I have spoke my warning, and if the ladies don't think it worth listening to, on account of my age, it is no fault of mine."

"We had better give it up, dear aunt," said Henry. "Let us mount again, and make our descent before we are overtaken by this threatened storm."

Lady Frances looked vexed, but she made no further opposition, and was just about replacing herself in her saddle, when the younger guide cried out,—

"If you go down now, you will leave company behind you, at any rate. Do you see that gentleman, yonder?" he added, pointing upwards to a spot considerably above them.

"Yes, in truth. There is a gentleman standing very much at his ease, up there, and

appearing to enjoy his position exceedingl said Henry.

"Oh! how I wish I were with him!" e claimed Fanny, eagerly; "I am sure the is something particularly exciting on the sp that he is gazing at. See how composedly folds his arms, and looks about him! \ are still enveloped in crags, but he is on spot where he can see everything, and it quite certain that he does not descry coming storm. His attitude is a perfe model of contemplative composure. Do l us go up to that spot, Henry! That sha content us, shall it not, dear aunt?"

"Yes, it shall," replied Lady Frances, ve resolutely folding her riding-dress round h and trying the firmness of the strings whi secured her hat. "Let the old man rema with the horses here, and Auguste show the way to that bit of platform there. I a certain that it is a most glorious position."

"Come along, then!" said Henry, "it ca not require many minutes to take us the and as soon as we have had one look-o from the spot where that gentleman standing, we will come quietly down agai

Master Louis, and return home like good children."

"You had better let me go with you, sir," said the old man.

"No, I think we had better not. There is nothing out of the common way in getting there, or we should not see that stately-looking personage there before us; but I don't choose to urge any man to go where he thinks there is danger, merely for my own amusement. If you will look after the horses and have them ready for us when we come back, your *petit pour boire* shall not be the less for not going with us. That gentleman, it is evident, has no guide at all."

"Oh! that's the Baron Rittesberg!" replied Louis. "If he was a poor man, and chose to be a guide, he would soon beat us all. However, sir, there may be still time to go up there and return in safety. The sooner you start the better."

The party took the hint, and moved briskly forward, but not before a look of triumph had been thrown back upon old Louis from the saucy, bright eyes of Auguste.

CHAPTER XIX.

On leaving the shed, the pathway not on made a sudden turn which took them out sight of it, but soon placed them out of sigh also, of all the objects which had been visib during their ascent, and which, from turn t turn, they had kept in view from the tim they had quitted the valley.

But they had now entered upon a sort o gorge, from whence they could see nothin distant. But there was no great evil in thi for it would only make the grand *look-ou* when they came to it, the more striking moreover, it had the great advantage of bein perfectly sheltered; so that the startlin

asts of wind which, quite as much as the reatening snow-cloud, had alarmed old uis ere they turned into it, were no longer t, and on they strode courageously.

Nay, even when, a very few moments after-rds, they all began to perceive that small es of snow were actually beginning to fall out them, they thought little of it, and ny even laughingly declared that such an edition would have wanted one of its most turesque features had it been made abso-ely without any snow at all.

The defile, however, was now narrowing idly before them, and then a sudden turn the northward showed them that they were last come to the region they had so often ed upon from below, and to which autumn vellers are wont to apply the phrase to ich all mountain travellers are exceedingly ached, and to declare that they were come "the region of eternal snow."

But such autumn travellers are mistaken. r a week or two in July and in the begin-ng of August even the Pic du Midi itself y be seen frowning in darkness, instead of

glaring in light; but this lasts for a very short time, and snow is again falling among the mountains, while the vallies are still gathering in their sunny crops.

So it was now; every step they advanced showed them that they were surely enough amidst snow now, whether eternal or not, and experienced eyes, indeed, who know the complexion of the genuine glacier, would have perceived to the right hand and to the left, unmistakable traces of an atmosphere that was, indeed, for ever freezing, though the more salient points of the range might occasionally throw off their white vestment during the strongest heat and the longest days of summer.

Yet still the English trio continued to follow their young guide without any other emotion being awakened by the scene around them than the agreeable excitement arising from finding themselves among objects not often looked upon by ordinary mortals, and just near enough to danger to feel the poetry of it without the tragedy.

"But we no longer see the gentleman who

was just now immediately over our heads," said Fanny to the guide.

"No, mademoiselle, and yet he may be standing in the same place still, and that is the place I am going to take you to; but we shall see him and lose him again, two to three times before we get there."

And so it proved; and whenever the zig-zag path, if path it could be called, brought them within sight of him, they still saw him standing with arms folded, in the same attitude of fixed and admiring contemplation, which had acted so powerfully on them all as an incentive to make them go on.

Nor was this same influence at all lessened as they approached nearer to him. They all felt quite sure that he was gazing upon something that was worth looking at; and when at length they reached the little platform on which he had stationed himself, they were none of them disposed to quarrel with the influence which had brought them there.

It was a scene that (comparatively speaking) few mortals have ever looked upon at all; and which fewer still have ever contemplated

twice. They looked down upon what seemed as it were a valley full of mountains. Height struggling with height, and peak with peak bristled up in wild confusion beneath their eyes, and their first emotion was made up of wonder and delight.

It is not in such a scene as this that ladies and gentlemen, unless they are very little ladies and gentlemen indeed, are disposed to recall, or are, in fact, capable of recalling the etiquette of a drawing-room, and least of all is a noble German likely to do so. The tall personage with folded arms, whose fearless attitude had drawn our trio on, to share with him the gratification, whatever it might be, which he was so evidently enjoying, was a Prussian nobleman; and let cavillers and levellers say what they will against the artificial claims of hereditary aristocracy, they cannot deny that throughout Germany at least, where its claims and its privileges are the most assured and the least disputed, it is the least obnoxious to objection upon the plea of an offensive use of its privileges. Having at length, and not without some degree

fatiguing exertion, reached the spot on which the Baron Rittesberg stood, our English trio gazed around them with rather a triumphan air, and Lady Frances emphatically exclaimed, "This is glorious!"

"Indeed, it is so," said the baron, with a cordial smile, and in perfectly well-pronounced English; "but it is a glory which few ladies, I believe, of any land, indulge themselves with gazing upon."

"What they lose thereby is a fitting punishment for their indolence or their folly," returned Lady Frances. "It is one of the most striking scenes I ever beheld," she added.

"You are without a guide, sir," said Henry.

"I have climbed too many mountains since I was of your age," replied the baron, laughing, "for me to fancy a guide wanted for such a comparatively easy ascent as this. When the season is a little more advanced, indeed, there are some few spots the safety of which may be a little doubtful, especially as it depends altogether upon the quantity of snow that may have fallen; for what may be perfectly good walking to-day, may become a very perilous pitfall to-morrow."

"So speedily?" said Henry, looking roun him with some feeling of anxiety, for it was n longer doubtful that the snow-storm predicte by old Louis was not only coming, but com Large flakes had begun falling, though n very thickly, during the last few steps of th ascent, but now they were falling with steadil and rapidly increasing abundance.

"You must go down, ladies! Instantl instantly, go down!" said the baron, uncer moniously giving his arm to Lady France who stood next him.

Henry, greatly alarmed by the tone i which their stalwart new acquaintance utter his warning, caught hold of his sister, an making a sign to Auguste to precede ther silently prepared to obey it.

They had not made two steps from the b of table-rock on which they had been standin before they all became conscious of the va difference of walking through snow, or with sight of it only. Every step, at least to th ladies and Henry, was taken with the unce tainty of an experiment, for before they ha pursued their downward path for five minute

the wind had so risen as to drive the thick white cloud by which they were surrounded, sometimes in one direction, sometimes in another, as the capricious eddies chanced to act upon it; so that sometimes their timid feet would sink, already boot deep, and sometimes with exceeding comfort, they would find themselves bruising their shins and ancles against the solid rock. The Baron de Rittesberg held firmly the arm of his companion within his own, nay, not contented with that, he grasped the hand tightly with his opposite hand, but he uttered not a word. This lasted for another five minutes, during which he had managed to sustain the steps of the now thoroughly terrified Lady Frances to a spot where a sudden projection of the rock formed a corner, in which he placed her, while he turned anxiously round to look for the others.

They were not yet in sight, but the snow was now falling with such vehement thickness and rapidity, that they might have been very near, yet still invisible.

"What can detain them?" cried the tremb-

ling Lady Frances,—trembling both from sudden cold and sudden terror.

"The difficulties of the way, good lady," he replied; adding, almost in a whisper, "this is no child's play."

A moment of very painful anxiety followed, which was considerably relieved by the appearance of Henry and the guide, supporting the uncertain steps of poor Fanny between them.

The look of suffering and of dread that the aunt and niece exchanged, as Lady Frances caught hold of Fanny, and drew her into the nook where she was herself in some degree sheltered, was piteous in the extreme, and well might the heart of Henry sink within him, when he saw the look of deep anxiety that contracted the open brow of the stranger, and the ashy paleness that blanched the face of their imprudent guide.

"Had we better stay here, think you, till the blast is past?" said Henry to the baron.

"Stay here?" was the reply.—"Good heaven! no! To stay here for twenty minutes would be certain destruction, for within that time the nook where these ladies are now

standing will be completely filled, and so will all the hollow places round us. Our danger arises from the chance that we may soon be unable to distinguish the new fallen snow from the solid rock, over which the only pathway lies."

"If we can but manage to reach the shed," said Henry, "we shall find our horses, and they will lead us better than we can lead ourselves."

"Assuredly; but we are not at the shed yet, sir, nor can you regain it by the path you used in mounting. Our only chance is by taking a circuit from this point, which, if we are not already too late, may carry us clear of the ravine, at the extreme edge of which you must have passed as you ascended. Dare you trust yourself to my guidance, madam?" he added, addressing himself to Lady Frances.

"Most gratefully, sir," she replied, "but I tremble to think how much I may impede you!"

"Then *do not* think of it, my good lady, for I would not have you tremble if I could help it," said he, kindly securing her arm

within his own; "and you, young gentlem[illegible] follow with your sister as nearly in our st[illegible] as may be. As to your guide, he looks, p[illegible] fellow, as if the taking care of himself wou[illegible] be quite as much as he was equal to."

"Now then," said Henry, "lead on, sir, an[illegible] by God's help and yours, I trust that we sha[illegible] be soon in safety."

Firmly but very cautiously, the baron[illegible] strode forward; though no longer in the pride of youth, he was still in the full strength of manhood, and Henry felt as he watched him, that even if choice had been in his power, it would have been difficult for him to have selected one whose whole aspect he could have preferred, as the protector of his aunt.

Both ladies behaved admirably well; they uttered not a word, but quietly yielded themselves to the attitude and position that was assigned them without a look or a movement, indicative of the terror that struck upon their hearts.

In this manner they proceeded for about a hundred yards, and then the baron, instead of following what bore the nearest resemblance

to a path, stepped cautiously along a ridge, drawing his companion's arm still more closely within his own.

Henry, who watched with earnest attention every step thus taken, placing his own feet, as nearly as might be, in the traces the baron had left, seemed to gain courage as he proceeded, from feeling that this ridge, narrow as it was, afforded a perfectly firm footing. The baron too, who knew every inch of the ground, felt his heart lightened by the consciousness that, if they reached the end of this ridge in safety, their worst danger would be over. And then it was, just as he had uttered the cheering words, "Two minutes more and we are safe!" that a sudden scream was heard from behind them, and, on looking round, they had the unspeakable horror of seeing the pale Fanny standing alone upon the ridge, while the unfortunate young guide, roused to sudden exertion, was in the very act of springing forward to catch hold of her, but of Henry Harley no trace was to be seen.

CHAPTER XX.

It is needless to say that this moment w one of exceeding agony to the two unfortuna ladies, nor was there anything like indifferen in the manner with which it was felt by t kind-hearted German ; nay, even the thoug less young guide himself showed no insensibil at that terrible moment, for he uttered a c so sharp and dismal, that it was not soon f gotten by any one who heard it.

But ere this first moment was past, anot event equally startling, if not equally horri occurred. The baron took one step backwar and seizing Fanny Harley in his arms, lift her forward to the spot where Lady Franc

stood in the full consciousness that every breath she drew might be her last.

"Hold to each other firmly!" he exclaimed, "and, as you value your lives, move not an inch! Auguste, draw near," he added; "you can at least stand firmly, and let them both steady themselves by leaning against your right arm, which you must throw round both."

The penitent lad obeyed with equal courage and dexterity, and the position of the unhappy females was rendered much more secure by it. Having paused for one half moment while this command was obeyed, the intrepid baron sprung into the mass of newly-fallen snow, which was now very nearly on a level with the ridge upon which they had been walking, and which at one point showed plainly enough that it had given way under the weight of Henry, who was now, however, totally out of sight. The act of this bold baron was, nevertheless, less desperately rash than it seemed. Had the heavy fall of snow been going on for a day instead of an hour, it would have been little else than a deliberate act of self-destruction; but he was too experienced a mountaineer not

to know that though the danger of bei
whelmed in the treacherous softness of
into which Henry had fallen was gi
grave, it would be infinitely more so wi
space even of another hour, if the
tinued. But now he felt tolerably cert
it must still be possible for them both
cover the rocky pathway from wh
one had fallen and the other leaped, b
of struggling upwards through the sc
which, might be sufficient in quantity
a man that had fallen, but not firm en
resist his efforts to make his way throu

The eyes both of aunt and niece we
with agonizing intensity upon the spo
Henry had disappeared, and where t
pected to lose sight of the baron also;
their unspeakable consolation, this was
case. He sunk deep, deep, deep; but
became evident that he had got footi
some morsel of vantage ground which
the upper part of his person free.

But it was long before they had the
ing joy of perceiving that Henry was ne
though still out of sight, for both thei

were clearly audible, nor was it long, either, before they had the further joy of seeing the beloved head which they feared was laid low for ever, appear above the snow, and it speedily became evident that they were now standing side by side upon some salient rock, which sufficed, as long as they could keep their feet, to preserve them from being submerged.

But a moment's reflection rendered it only too evident that this simple-seeming act of keeping their feet was in truth one of the most difficult performances that it was possible for man to achieve. Not to mention that even this, difficult as it was, would not be sufficient to save them.

"How are they to get to us?" groaned Lady Frances.

"He is lost, he is lost!" replied Fanny, "unless we can devise some means of assisting him."

"*We* devise! Oh! Fanny, Fanny," replied the aunt, shuddering through every limb, "we ourselves standing here, on the very brink of eternity, and you talk of our assisting him?"

"And not only him, Aunt Frances," replied

Fanny. "We must assist them both. Will venture to step forward with me? The treme danger, this boy says, continues c for a few yards farther—Will you venture go with me, or will you go on with August Or shall we all three go on together and e deavour to reach the shed?"

"It is what we must do, my poor Fanny replied Lady Frances, "or else remain here perish. But how can that help them?"

"Then at any rate let us not stand here, you truly say, to perish. I will take the fi step forward." And without waiting for answer, and doubtless strengthened by t hope of saving her brother, Fanny gently d engaged herself from both her aunt and t guide, and with a steady head, and steady fo advanced three or four paces without falteri which sufficed to bring her to a spot on ea side of which were still visible, at short inte vals, masses of bristling rock, only partia covered with snow. This was enough to ass her of comparative safety, and there she sto with trembling anxiety, while her aunt, s holding by the arm of Auguste, followed in t traces she had left.

"Now, then, let us lose not a moment, dearest Fanny, in obtaining assistance for them!" cried Lady Frances.

"This young man says there is no more real danger now, and that the worst that can happen to us here, is that we may slip, and tumble. Your courage, dearest, has enabled us to pass the only real danger; and my hope for our beloved Henry rests upon the conviction that such a man as he whom we have just seen plunge after him, would not have been mad enough to do so, had not his knowledge of the ground given him fair reason to hope that he might save him."

"You are right, I feel certain you are right," replied Fanny. "We must lose not a moment in returning to the shed, and old Louis will tell us what steps ought to be taken."

The trio were advancing as fast as the nature of the ground, and its snow-encumbered state, would permit, while this was spoken; and then they became silent, and clinging closely together, and availing themselves whenever it was possible of the assistance of the

man, who, penitent for the msichief his ra—sh-
ness had occasioned, was ready enough to
repair it by every means in his power, they at
length reached the shed, where they found old
Louis and the horses, faithfully waiting for
them.

The old man was in a state of terrible
anxiety; but having uttered a shout of joy as
they approached, his next effort was to pour a
volley of reproaches on the boy. But in th is
he was speedily stopped short, by the gaspin g
eagerness with which both the ladies assaile d
him with a hurried statement of the dreadfu l
accident, and a demand for all the help he
could give.

The dismay with which he listened to their
account for a moment, seemed to quench every
spark of hope within them.

"Over the blue rock, was it?" said the
horror-struck old man, turning to Auguste.

"No, Louis, not the blue rock," replied the
young man, eagerly, "nor before a dozen yards
after we had passed it."

Without uttering a word in reply to this
old Louis began, with fingers trembling with

haste, to take the harness from the backs of the horses, commanding Auguste by an expressive movement of the head to follow his example; this was obeyed with promptitude, and almost in a moment the two horses on which they had been employed, stood free from all harness. The old man, who had completed his work most rapidly, had caught hold of the third, and was about to perform the same operation upon him, when he suddenly stopped short, and turning towards the two ladies, who were standing together, as if to afford each other mutual support, he said, "I must not ask either of you two, I suppose, to ride back alone, and as fast as the beast can carry you?"

"You may ask me to do it, and I will obey you," said Lady Frances, preparing without a moment's delay to get into the saddle.

"Tell me what I must do when I get to the hotel?"

"Don't wait till you get to the hotel, but tell the very first folks that you meet with, that they will be paid nobly, if they come, as many as they can get together, *at once*, and bring

ropes with them. And you, lady, get off your horse, and let two of them mount in your place; and you tell them yourself what you will give them if they come in time to save your young gentleman. I will answer for M. le Baron: he will be sure to give a good deal more than any one ought to expect."

Not one word in reply was spoken by the Lady Frances. She gave one speaking look to Fanny, and was almost immediately out of sight.

The two guides then set about collecting whatever parts of the harness they thought might be available, and manfully began returning to the spot where the accident had happened, having first employed a long barége scarf which poor Fanny had fortunately twisted round her person, to secure the two quiet little hacks who were left to share with her the possession of the shed.

The snow still continued to fall so thick that it was difficult to discern any object with distinctness at the distance of half-a-dozen yards; but this mattered little to the

men, for every inch of the road was as well known to them, as were the floors of the different *mansardes* in which they slept; to that feeling of desperate terror too, which had naturally enough fallen upon Lady Frances and her niece, they were utterly insensible. They knew perfectly well that they had a difficult job before them, but they knew also that if they succeeded in getting through it, they should be handsomely paid; and though the feelings with which they set about it, had something a little approaching the grave and solemn, there was not a single shade of despondency mixed with them.

Far worse, and infinitely more painful, was the condition of poor Fanny. Not only was she left alone to all the horrors of uncertainty, but she had the agony of knowing, without any uncertainty at all, that her beloved brother had fallen over a precipice, and must inevitably have been buried in the snow.

That his condition was not absolutely hopeless, she gathered from the dauntless act of the stranger whom they had had the extraordinary good fortune to meet where it

was so extremely improbable that they shou
meet any one; and this it was which add
the doubtful blessing of uncertainty to th
tempestuous ocean of thoughts which seem
to be overwhelming her.

Her situation was, in truth, a very terri
one, and that she did not actually sink und
it, and lose her senses, showed that she h
a mind of stronger tone than is bestow
upon the majority of women.

Meanwhile Lady Frances, with a degree
moral courage fully equal to that of her nie
and with the additional calmness and s
possession which a dozen more years of l
were likely to bring with them, pursued h
way towards Eaux-chaudes with very lit
consideration either for her own fatigue
that of her horse.

The last instructions of the old Lor
proved very important, for they induced h
to stop at a large farm-house a mile or t
short of the town, and there, having du
obeyed also his valuable practical hint co
cerning the rich reward which would
assured, she obtained prompt assistance f

the two gentlemen, whom she described as having met with an accident in a snow-storm in the mountains, at about an hour's distance above *the* shed, which shed was quite as well known as the parish church.

By means of this close obedience to her orders, she had the satisfaction of seeing three stout men, well mounted, set off, with pickaxe, cord, and leaping poles, but when she attempted to describe the road, they assured her they knew it a great deal better than she did.

This good deed accomplished, she pursued her way to the hotel, and having reached it, her first care was neither for her sure-footed little horse or for herself. Her first care was to obtain one of those snug contrivances called *chaise à porteur*, by the aid of which those who will be adventurous after they have ceased to be agile, are enabled to mount, when many more able than themselves to enjoy the regions of "pure and serene air," are obliged to remain below.

Lady Frances fortunately succeeded with wonderfully little delay in obtaining one of

those very accommodating contrivances, even this, short as it was, could not be counted lost time, for a portion of it devoted to giving orders that a medical should immediately follow in a close carri and the rest in furnishing herself with w in case a restorative should be required; then she got into the chair, and having posited an unusually large gratuity in hand of each porter before she set out, promised double the sum if they did th business rapidly and well, she was convey to the spot she had left, with a degree rapidity that astonished herself.

On arriving at the shed she found poo Fanny there, still alone, and so miserably and exhausted did she look, that the fir reward of Lady Frances for all the coura she had shown, and all the exertion she h made, arose from seeing the poor girl swall a glass of wine, and then avail herself of h aunt's offer of sitting down for awhile in t commodious chair which had carried h instead of resuming her seat upon the m floor of the shed.

But of Henry, and his brave companion, he could give no tidings. The snow, during he last hour, had ceased to fall, and though he time of sunset was rapidly approaching, ıe light had not yet left the narrow defile, the entrance of which the little shelter was tuated.

"This lengthened suspense is intolerable, ıy dearest Fanny!" said her aunt. "Have ou made no attempt to learn what is going ın?"

"Alas! Aunt Frances, I dared not trust my strength to make such efforts as you have done," replied the poor girl; adding mournfully, "I felt my own helplessness too painfully to venture upon doing anything that might add to what you suffer already! But I feel better now; the wine has given me strength, and your presence will encourage me. I will make the attempt again, with you, dear aunt, if you wish it."

"Let us think a little first, what it will be wisest to do," returned Lady Frances. "Have not the men and horses I sent here, arrived yet?"

"Oh, yes, long ago; they came so soo after you left me, that at first I thought was impossible you could have sent them."

"I rode hard, Fanny, and I found peop ready to make the attempt a long way befo I reached the town. Did they go up the pa directly?"

"Yes! without five minutes' delay. The only staid long enough to make me descril the place where the accident happened."

"And since they went, you have heard nc thing?"

"Nothing! Before it ceased snowing. was so obviously impossible for me to ha made my way back towards the fatal spc that it did not even occur to me to attem it; but when it had ceased to fall, my earne desperate desire to know the worst, made resolve upon making the effort, and I did But not only did I find every step so diffic as at once to convince me that my strengt must fail before I attained my object, but tha even if it proved otherwise, and that—if it were possible that our dearest Henry could be rescued from the horrid death that threaten

him—my recklessly plunging into fresh danger could only be the means of making the difficulty of helping him greater; and then it was I turned back, but even so it was no very easy matter for me to reach again the shelter in which you left me."

While poor Fanny in hurried accents gave this melancholy account of her own helpless inactivity, which was assuredly as unavoidable as her suffering under it, Lady Frances was debating with herself whether indeed there were not more real wisdom in Fanny's submitting to her conscious helplessness, than there would be in urging her to overcome it, in the hope of shortening the dreadful interval during which they must still endure all the agonies of suspense if they remained where they were. For a few moments she stood perfectly motionless at the entrance to the shed, but it cost her more to do this than all her previous exertions had done; and she was beginning to feel that, however wise such forbearance might be, it was not in her nature to exercise it much longer, when in the now waning light she discovered objects slowly ap-

proaching down the steep descent upon whi
her eyes were fixed.

"Fanny! Fanny!" she cried, in a voi
that sounded more like a note of triumph th
despair, and, without uttering another wo
Lady Frances rushed forward to meet t
figures she had descried.

Nor had the waning light deceived h
Several steps in advance of all the party ca
Henry Harley, with dress disordered, dis
velled hair, and a face as pale as death, b
evidently unscathed in limb. The slippe
snow-encumbered space which divided th
was passed in a moment, and the justl
beloved nephew was clasped in an embra
which could scarcely have been more affectic
ate had it been maternal.

"Where is my poor Fanny?" were the fi
words he spoke, and they were answered
her springing into his arms, where indeed s
was most fondly held for a moment; but
the next he withdrew his arms from her, an
turning abruptly round towards the grou
which followed him, he said, in accents of dee
suffering,—

"Oh, Fanny! Look there! He is dead, Fanny!—The noble fellow is dead!"

Another moment sufficed to show them the body of Baron Rittesberg, borne down the steep descent by four men, who made their way into the shed, and gently laid him upon its floor.

The miserable catastrophe seemed to be revealed by the first glance at his rigid limbs and death-pale face.

"Dead!" cried Fanny. "Dead from saving you! Oh, Henry! How dare I feel so much selfish joy?"

"How know you that he is dead?" exclaimed Lady Frances, kneeling on the ground beside him. "Alas! no pulse—no vestige of life!—no movement of the heart! Oh! how this vision will haunt us through our lives!"

"You then escaped all danger, Henry?" said his sister, "and his noble effort to save you was needless!"

"Not so, not so!" replied the miserable young man. "Had he not done what he did—had he not sacrificed his own life for an unknown stranger, I should have perished! —And he would be still in the enjoyment of existence!"

"Here is the carriage!" cried Lady France[illegible] starting up. "I am positive I hear th[illegible] tinkling of the bells with which they alway[illegible] drive in the snow. Fly, one of you!" sh[illegible] said, addressing the horror-struck men wh[illegible] stood around the body; "fly, I tell you, t[illegible] the place down there, where the carriage[illegible] road ceases. . . . . If there be a surgeon[illegible] a doctor . . . . . bring him instantly. . . . . It is possible, just possible!"

* * * *

Her commands were very promptly obeye[illegible] for the hearts of the assistants were in t[illegible] task. The Baron Rittesberg was well kno[illegible] among them, and the noble act which h[illegible] now laid him low was well calculated to interest the veriest stranger in his beh[illegible]lf. The two men who started upon this erra[illegible]nd evidently lost no time in performing it, for they returned in a wonderfully short space of time, bringing with them a fat, short-winded little man, who, for a moment, seemed utterly incapable of recovering the breath he had lost by the enforced rapidity with which he had mastered the steep ascent to the spot where his services were wanted.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE panting little French doctor was a stumpy, pursy, little man, but he was not a stupid one; for, upon entering the shed, and finding it nearly dark, and then being told that his patient was the Baron Rittesberg, he very logically observed that, if the gentleman were a German, there could be no doubt of their finding materials for striking a light in his cigar-case, and that if so, they should have no difficulty in obtaining the light necessary to the examining into his condition, for that he had himself the end of a *bougie* in his pocket, without which he never set out upon a night expedition, though he confessed that,

upon this particular occasion, he had forgotte his matches.

His conjecture, however, proved to be pe fectly correct, for the Baron's pocket, on bein examined, was found to contain a very com plete cigar-lighting apparatus.

The agitated feelings of Henry and of the tw ladies were deeply wounded, and exceedingl irritated by the almost light tone, and th many unnecessary words of the little docto but they were mistaken in supposing hi inefficient. There was no necessity for h talking so much, but had he been as silent a his patient himself, he really could not ha lost less time.

Having first, with his bit of *bougie* in h own hand, very deliberately and careful examined the patient, he turned round Henry, who was standing close to him, an said: "Do you think your hand will b steady enough, young gentleman, to hold th light for me?"

The feeling of dislike which the stum little man had begun to produce in the mi of Henry vanished in an instant, for, in th

instant, Henry received a conviction that the stumpy little man did not feel quite certain that the Baron was dead.

It must be impossible to describe the sudden revulsion of feeling which this conviction produced, and therefore it shall not be attempted. It is enough to say, that the sick faintness of the heart, of which the young man was sensible, and which he had almost hailed with joy, as a symptom that he, too, had been hurt to death, now seemed most miraculously cured; and when he took the bit of *bougie* in his hand he felt quite as capable of holding it as when he set off from the Eaux-chaudes in the morning.

He had divined at once that the stumpy little man was going to bleed him, and in this there was hope, most blessed hope! But when, after waiting for an awful interval of about twenty seconds, the blood actually welled forth, slowly at first, but then copiously, the miracle seemed completely accomplished in all ways; for the Baron soon opened the eyes that were supposed to be for ever closed in death, and, moreover, he heaved a gentle

sigh; Lady Frances, instead of looking v
like a distracted sybil, immediately resun
the appearance of a rational woman; Fan
indeed, was not so completely cured but t
she clasped her hands rather vehemently, a
indulged in what might have been thougl
mal-à-propos flood of tears; but Henry h
self was so wonderfully acted upon by
spectacle, that he not only immediately
as well as ever he did in his life, but, as
would have declared himself, a great d
better.

The clever little doctor had not only
end of a wax candle in his long and la
coat pocket, but he had a great many thi
beside, and, among them, a well-arranged
of tape, with which, when he had ta
sufficient of the brave baron's blood, he v
scientifically prevented it from flowing
longer; and this done he declared, in rat
a jocose style, that he really saw no ca
for delaying the return of every individua
the amiable society around him to the Ea
chaudes, an opinion which was evidently v
comed with exceeding joy.

He then assisted, with his own stumpy, but vigorous arms, to place his patient in one corner of the vehicle which he had used for his own conveyance; and having achieved this, he returned once more to the shed, and carefully taking what remained of the burning candle in his own fingers, he held it successively rather close to the faces of the two ladies, and to that of Henry also, and having bestowed a little time upon the examination of each, he said:—"The carriage is made to hold four, but five must go in it, for though you all three look prodigiously well pleased, there is not one amongst ye that does not look as pale as a spectre, and if you get upon horses, the chances are that you will tumble off again before you get to your journey's end. So be pleased to get in, and pack yourselves together as conveniently as you can on the side opposite my patient. I myself must take the more commodious seat next him, for the which I grieve, but as it is much too dark to see, I must contrive to feel how he is getting on by means of his pulse, and this can only be conveniently managed by my sitting next

him. So I hope the ladies will have th kindness to excuse me."

There was no great difficulty in granting th little man absolution on this score, and, hap pily, there was no difficulty either in convey ing the baron to the house he occupied in th town. He suffered perhaps rather more tha he confessed to his companions, from a violer sprain of his right ancle, which had, in fac been the cause of the fainting, which had occa sioned such terrible alarm; but, beyond thi he had received little or no important injur The spirited act he had performed to rescu from very probable death a perfect strange deserved all praise, both for its kindness an its courage, but it was far from being th desperate deed which his new acquaintan conceived it to be. The Baron Rittesbe knew this ascent to his favourite platform, well as a parrot knows his perch, or a bea the pole, on which it is their delight to climb

He knew that, for about a hundred yard there was a precipice beside the path, that woul have been a perilous, if not a deadly fall, there had been no snow-storm at all, to a ma

who took it involuntarily, and not as a leap, for which he was prepared; but with his pole in his hand, a companion which the mountain-lover never leaves behind him, there was little danger in it. Even the heavy fall of snow which had overtaken them so suddenly, rather lessened than increased the danger to one who knew every hollow and every salient crag so well as Rittesberg, but to so perfect a stranger to the ground as was Henry Harley, the danger was indeed great; and even if the fall itself were made with impunity, as happily had been the case with him, there was a certainty of very serious danger and difficulty, from his endeavours to extricate himself from the snow, concerning the depth and the lay of which he was perfectly ignorant.

It was for this reason that Rittesberg had taken that plunge which had effectually saved the young Englishman from all serious inconvenience from his fall, but which, for the present, had lamed himself very painfully.

The stout-hearted German, however, did not again relapse into insensibility; nay, he had both strength and spirit enough remaining

to assure the anxious party, who left him at his lodgings, that he wanted nothing more to complete his cure, than the assurance that not one of his new acquaintance were likely to suffer in any way from their adventure, and a free supply of cold water for the use of his sprained ancle.

It was at no very late hour on the following morning, that Henry Harley was again at the door of the baron's lodgings, to enquire how he had passed the night. The account was very favourable, and the servant who gave it said, in addition to the assurance that his master was much better, that if the young gentleman would be pleased to call an hour or two later, the Baron Rittesberg would be very happy to see him.

This was joyful news at the breakfast-table of Lady Frances and her niece. It was on this day that they had purposed to leave Eaux-chaudes en route for Italy; but as Henry's eagerness to get on was quite forgotten, nor would either of the ladies have easily persuaded themselves that any motive could justify them in losing sight of their new

acquaintance before they were assured that he was no longer suffering from the effects of his generous hardihood in the service of a stranger. This feeling was equally shared by them all, and the idea of an immediate departure entirely abandoned.

But when Henry returned from his visit, the ladies, though they fully sympathized in the feeling of gratitude which had decided him upon delaying his departure, certainly felt a little surprised by his assuring them that it was absolutely impossible they could proceed to Rome till the Baron Rittesberg could go with them.

"Go with us?" said Lady Frances, opening her eyes so as to make them very unequivocally express astonishment.

"Does the gentleman want to go to Rome, my dear Harley?"

"Yes, dear aunt, he does," replied Henry.

"And does he also want to go to Florence and Genoa, and all the other places of which you gave us a catalogue the other day, and which you said it was so absolutely necessary that we should visit en route?"

"No, Lady Frances, I believe his intentio is to go direct to Rome, for he has left his wi and daughter there," replied her nephew.

"And the necessity of our seeing thes places? Does that exist no longer?" sh rejoined with a smile.

"I do'nt remember that I ever talked abou necessity, did I?" he replied, colouring. "Bu if I did," he added, "you must have know that it was a very exaggerated manner speaking. There cannot certainly be a necessity for it, you know."

"That is true, certainly," she said, with look at Fanny that seemed to invite a lit quizzing at her brother's versatility. B Fanny did not answer it, for she felt abo Henry at that moment as we all do for treasure when we have been in danger losing it. She could not quiz him at th moment, but she looked in his face with little, gentle, loving air of surprise, that seem coaxingly to ask for an explanation.

Her brother caught the look, and understoo it perfectly.

"I know that you will both of you think me

very strange, and very ridiculous also perhaps, if I confess the truth to you—nevertheless I give you fair warning that no *ridicule* will avail to make me change my purpose. Nothing but your *gravely* telling me, one or both of you, that it is seriously displeasing to you, will have any effect, and even then, if I yield, I shall not attempt to disguise from you that I shall make a very painful sacrifice."

"What are you talking about, my dearest Henry?" said his sister. "To what sacrifice are you alluding? and why do you suppose that we either of us wish you to make any?"

There was something so innocently puzzled in the look of Fanny as she said this, that it chased the mysteriously grave and embarrassed look of Henry into one of his frank and happy smiles.

"I am a clumsy negotiator, I believe, in my own affairs," said he, "and only skilful in creating difficulties, when none exist. Why should I not tell you at once that I have been sitting for about three hours with Baron Rittesberg, and that I have found him to be so very remarkable a man, and in my estimation so very

admirable a one, that I would far rather char the whole of our travelling arrangements th lose sight of him. All I can plead in exc of the seeming selfishness of this declaration my very firm conviction that you will both you, when you have seen a little more of hi feel exactly as I do on the subject; and the fore, in spite of appearances, I should be real and truly acting very ungenerously towar you by suffering you to lose the happiness knowing him, rather than dictate a sudd change of measures to you, the motive f which, at this moment, you cannot und stand."

"Shall we frankly yield ourselves to sovereign will and pleasure, Fanny?" sa Lady Frances, laughing; "or shall we do bat for our freedom, and force him to confess th when a gentleman is travelling with ladies, bounden duty is to consult their caprices, a not his own?"

"Have you no curiosity to find out what is that has thus bewitched him?" said Fanny "unless he intends to select a route for u wherein we are to encounter more precipice

of a nature to make this stout German's knack of jumping over them especially necessary for his convenience. His present conduct is a perfect mystery, and, as such, exciting my curiosity most powerfully."

"Very well observed, my dear, and as it excites my curiosity also, let us even yield ourselves captive, and find the reward of our meek obedience in discovering how it is that a middle-aged German gentleman has contrived to bewitch so completely a young English one," replied her aunt.

Henry Harley declared himself completely satisfied by the meek obedience, and made not the least objection to their doing anything and everything that entered their heads for the purpose of discovering why it was that he exacted it. And this point having been settled to the satisfaction of all parties, a very short interval of rest sufficed to restore Baron Rittesberg's ancle to such a state of convalescence as compelled even the stumpy little doctor himself to confess that he thought he might venture to set off, even though he himself was obliged to remain behind.

No obligation less deeply felt than that which Henry Harley owed to the Baron Rittesberg would have induced him to change his place in his own travelling carriage for one in that of his new friend so often as he did; but far, very far, were either his aunt or sister from objecting to his thus evincing his gratitude; and long before they had reached the end of their journey they were both perfectly well disposed to avow that they no longer saw anything extraordinary in his yielding to the baron's invitations to do so, or in his appearing to consider it infinitely less a duty, than a pleasure.

END OF VOL. I.

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SECOND LOVE;

OR,

BEAUTY AND INTELLECT.

A NOVEL.

BY

MRS. TROLLOPE,

AUTHOR OF

"FATHER EUSTACE," "THE LOTTERY OF MARRIAGE,"

"PETTICOAT GOVERNMENT," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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SECOND LOVE;

OR,

BEAUTY AND INTELLECT.

CHAPTER I.

We left Henry Harley, at the end of the last chapter, travelling with his aunt, his sister, and his new friend the Baron Rittesberg, from the Pyrenees to Rome; and we will now rejoin him in the eternal city, where he had established himself to the great satisfaction of himself and his companions, in excellent private lodgings in the most agreeable part of the Corso, and within about two minutes' transit from his own drawing-room to that of his new friend.

And here a short retrospect appears to[illegible] necessary, in order to make the reader in som[illegible] degree acquainted with this Prussian baro[illegible] and his family. The Baron Rittesberg w[illegible] the youngest of three sons; his father bein[illegible] of old and very pure nobility, but of sma[illegible] hereditary estate, a misfortune which w[illegible] happily redeemed by the large portion whic[illegible] he received upon marrying an English wife.

The three brothers were all military me[illegible] The eldest, as the declared heir of both fath[illegible] and mother, was a great gentleman, and f[illegible] voured, as is usual in such cases, with one [illegible] those easy and pleasant little staff appoin[illegible] ments which may be considered as the sug[illegible] plums in that honourable *gâteau de plomb*, [illegible] soldier's life.

The second obtained the peaceable post [illegible] governor of a small fortress on the Rhin[illegible] where he lived, and married, and became th[illegible] father of two or three more military Baro[illegible] Rittesbergs. The third son, Carl, Hen[illegible] Harley's new acquaintance, had the mo[illegible] decided and unequivocal hatred to his pr[illegible] fession; its discipline and its decorations we[illegible]

alike unpalatable to him. His greatest ambition was to be the master of his own movements and his own time, and he would have considered a single parade miserably ill paid had it been rewarded by permission to wear a whole galaxy of stars, and a bit of ribbon in every button-hole into the bargain.

What his fate would have been if his mother had not died, and left him a legacy of three thousand pounds, when he was about three and twenty years old, it is difficult to guess; but no sooner had this perfectly unexpected accession of wealth been made known to him, than his resolution was taken. He immediately gave up his profession, purchased an exceedingly stout travelling trunk, and set off to travel over the whole earth. Such was as literally and precisely his scheme of travel, as the reaching Paris is that of a young English student who sets off with twenty pounds and a month's vacation, to see the Louvre.

Notwithstanding his undoubting persuasion that he was a rich man, he travelled with economy, and had already achieved no inconsiderable portion of his enterprise, when he

und himself at Madras. He had not re- — e-
ıained there long, before he discovered tha — at
ne had made a mistake about the relative pro- — o-
portion between three thousand pounds, an — d
the expenses incidental upon travelling ov — er
the whole earth; and having made acquain — t-
ance with an English merchant, he mention — ed
very candidly to him the fact of his havi — ng
discovered that he was very poor. The m — er-
chant, whose name was Roberts, consented t
take him as a clerk, and then he fell in lov
with the merchant's daughter, and the me
chant's daughter fell in love with him.

Père Roberts was very angry, but fil
Roberts declared that she would never marr
any other man; and being just of age, and
possession of a few thousand pounds by
gift of a god-mother, they eloped, married,
returned to Europe.

Carl Rittesberg, with his usual thoug
ness, set off in grand style; his wife, wh
a splendidly handsome woman, received
flattering reception from her husband's
who were exceedingly proud of he
eldest brother, now in possession of t

estate, and of his mother's much more important fortune, invited them to his mansion, and omitted no opportunity of displaying his sister-in-law's grace and beauty, and his own gallantry and magnificence to all beholders.

A gay party being made to show her some of the most beautiful scenery in the neighbourhood of his residence, he asked and obtained the honour of driving this admired sister-in-law in an open carriage lately arrived from England, and of which he was almost as proud as he was of her. But unfortunately for him, poor gentleman, the expedition ended by his upsetting the carriage and being brought home grievously hurt. His injuries, however, were not considered as dangerous, nor had he himself the least idea that they were so; nevertheless, he very pompously declared that it was his wish to make his will, "in case of the worst," adding that even if on the present occasion it should prove an idle and unnecessary precaution, it would at least afford him an opportunity of proving the deep concern he felt at having hazarded the invaluable life of his sister-in-law by his careless

ving, as well as of shewing the sincerity o[illegible]
e affection, admiration, and esteem with[illegible]h
which she had inspired him.

And having made this speech, he made hi[illegible]
will also, bequeathing to her, and to her littl[illegible]
daughter Frederica after her, the magnifice[illegible]
sum of thirty thousand pounds. . . . . An[illegible]
then he died, greatly to the surprise of [illegible]
friends and of the rural doctor to boot, w[illegible]
had failed to discover the small fracture wh[illegible]c
had once more relieved the improvident C[illegible]ar
Rittesberg from the embarrassments which hi[illegible]
incurable carelessness was again bringing upo[illegible]
him.

And this time the relief was not likely
be merely temporary, for the money
left very securely in trust for his daug[illegible]
which not only made the capital really
but gave the Baron Carl a sort of r[illegible]
for the interest also; a feeling whic[illegible]
turned to excellent account by his
estimable wife, who took advantage
obtain the regulation of their exp[illegible]
which, from that time forward, had
well managed as to give him all the

of wealth, restricting him only in such fancies as might have led to the bargaining for a pyramid, or a successful negotiation perhaps, with the King of Naples, for the purchase of all the hidden treasures of Herculaneum.

But Madame Rittesberg was much too clever and too well-judging a woman to make any plan for being stationary a part of her project of reform. She knew her husband too well to wish for it. Nevertheless, she loved the feeling of home too, and great praise was due, both to her conjugal affection which induced her to submit to having no home at all, and the truly feminine ingenuity with which she constantly continued to make the halting-place of a few months assume the comfortable aspect of a real home.

But the improvidence above alluded to, though it was necessary to state it when giving a sketch of his life, was not the most important trait in the character of Baron Rittesberg; neither was it his still fresh and youthful passion for wandering; though Henry Harley, perhaps, felt some little sympathy with this, which had so seized upon the heart and

again.

It is not always, nay, it is not oft
believe, that any two persons, not linke
gether by natural ties, conceive a very
liking for each other's society, where the
difference of thirty years between them i
It is not often that either the tastes,
judgments, of persons so circumstanced,
accord so thoroughly as to produce be
them that pleasurable sensation that w
sympathy, and without which no dry, in
tual approval, or even admiration, can
to make frequent companionship deli
But when by some rare chance this sym
does exist, and make itself felt by pers
situated, the charm of it is enjoyed on
sides with all the raciness of unexpected
sure. and the tie becomes a very strong

Henry Harley, is very evident. That the baron had taken a very hazardous plunge in order to rescue Henry from danger, was quite certain; nor was it less so, though the baron only was fully aware of it, that Henry had steadily refused to profit by the aid that was sent them, till he had seen the lamed baron safely deposited on the stout arms of three of the men, and in a fair way of being securely borne to a place of safety; and then, and then only, he accepted the assistance that remained for himself.

All this was well and nobly done on both sides, and neither party was likely very speedily to forget what they owed to the other.

But this would not have sufficed to make them the strongly attached companions which they afterwards became.

The routine of Henry's life and education had been perfectly *en règle* as an English gentleman; and a very good routine it is as times go. But the life and education of Rittesberg had been very different, and might have been either better or worse than the other, accord-

ing to the nature of the individual upon whom the experiment was tried. Henry was as little the slave of opinion, perhaps, as it was possible for any man to be, who had been educated as he had been; but Carl Rittesberg was the slave of no opinion ever formed by man. Not that he systematically rejected the opinions of his fellow-men; far from it, his first impulse being an almost child-like facility of belief in everything that was broadly and confidently stated. He had no natural propensity to scepticism, but the contrary, as may always be observed in natures pre-eminently true, till the sad time arrives when their truth teaches them that they must either become sceptical or false.

This time had come long ago to Rittesberg, but its effect upon him was singularly modified by his peculiar temperament. Most men equally acute as he had now become in detecting fallacy, and equally hostile to it by his own nature, would have grown harsh from the frequent warfare to which he was called; but the "sweet-blooded" nature of Carl Rittesberg rendered this absolutely impossible. It seemed as if he were born with an incapacity for feel

ing the sensation which men call irritation; and all the roughness and rudeness that was in him, showed itself in an occasional merry laugh, when some proposition which had nothing but its rust to make it venerable, was brought forward with the overpowering air of authority.

It is not easy to convey a full and correct idea of the effect which these *peculiarities* in Baron Rittesberg produced on Henry Harley.

Nothing could be much less similar than the antecedents of these two gentlemen. The elder had at an early age emancipated himself from all the trammels with which society surrounds its accredited members, daring to think for himself, even on subjects where it is the custom of civilized nations to let others think for them. Whether he were drummed to parade, or drummed into any other position or condition in which he felt his mind enthralled, it mattered little. The thinking apparatus with which he had been gifted by nature, was endowed with great strength and activity, and it was painful work to keep the springs at rest in order to enable him to sit still and look civil, while privileged dullness demanded his

attention as its due. And so, as we have seen, he took the very first opportunity of breaking loose, that he might breast the ocean, climb the rock, range the forest, free to meditate and adore, without any danger of being told that he was offending against established discipline, established usage, or established opinion.

Henry Harley, on the other hand, had never yet enjoyed any such opportunity; and yet he was scarcely less fitted by nature to enjoy it than the baron himself. In proportion to his age he had read more than the baron, but in proportion to his intellect, he had thought much less, and this had doubtless made a very essential difference between the two men, independent of the difference of age. But, in both, the love of truth reigned SUPREME; and this it was which produced the irresistible attraction which both so strongly felt.

But the truth thus loved, was not *merely* that excellent truth in facts which we sometimes find so admirably predominant in uncorrupted minds. Neither was it *merely* that half worship of scientific truth which has

taught us to learn and unlearn, so much for the glory of God and the benefit of man. Neither was it *merely* that honest truth which turns with loathing from the simulation of a feeling that is not in us.

No, it was not merely either of these excellent symptoms of truth, each of which may be found distinct, and apart from the others, in different individuals. But it was an abstract love of truth that in some degree had a mixture of worship in it, and it was felt by both, as it ever must be wherever it exists, as a ray direct from the divinity. And this it was, this pure worship of the true, and this holy hatred of the false, which was felt between them, almost before it was fully understood, which bound their hearts together as no hearts can be bound without it.

And assuredly in our intercourse with our fellow-creatures, there are few sensations more exciting than the conviction that in listening to the words of a companion, we are actually studying a new page in that most interesting of all created things—the human mind. Were this pleasure less rare, it might perhaps be less

precious; but be this as it may, Carl Rit
berg and Henry Harley wearied not of list
ing to each other, and at the time we r
find them together at Rome, a stronger feel
of affection existed between them than ther
often found between two men, the one be
fifty-four and the other twenty-three.

CHAPTER II.

THE family of the Baron Rittesberg consisted, as the reader already knows, of a wife and one daughter. Madame Rittesberg was not yet quite forty years of age, and was still a very beautiful woman, and so was her daughter Frederica also, who at the age of nineteen scarcely looked a dozen years younger than her mother. After all that has been related as to the manner in which the two families had become acquainted, it will be readily believed that a very considerable and rapid degree of intimacy between the ladies, as well as between the gentlemen, was the consequence.

I have felt myself in some sort obliged t apologise for the strong affection which wa so speedily generated between [my elder] baron and my youthful hero; but whe stating that a very few weeks sufficed establish and ripen a very solid friendsh between Fanny Harley and Frederica R tesberg, no such apology is necessary, f assuredly, nothing could be more natural.

Neither could anything have been mo desirable, for the intimacy was calculated t be highly advantageous to both. But thoug Fanny was the elder, and, moreover, wha would generally be considered as the mor highly educated of the two, it was Fanny and not Frederica, who certainly derived th most essential benefit from their intercours for it cured her of the only very importan fault she had.

This important fault was the intoleranc or something very like it, towards folly an ignorance, which she had permitted to contra in some degree the kindness of her hear She disliked silliness of all kinds too heartil for she sometimes scrupled not to avo

companionship with it at the expense of politeness and good nature. But she had not lived in habits of close intimacy with Frederica for many weeks before she became conscious of this weakness, and heartily ashamed of it.

There was a grace, a brightness, a brilliancy of spirit about Frederica which seemed to render all intimate association with dullness as something positively monstrous and unnatural, and yet Fanny soon perceived that such association produced no irritation, no pain, nor even any perceptible ennui in her new friend, and that, whenever it took place, the brightness of Frederica was, as it ought to be, more powerfully influential than the dullness of her companions, so that, instead of being affected by it herself, she seemed to cure it with most miraculous skill in others.

It was really an edifying sight to see the fastidious Fanny Harley watching all the sweet-tempered, pretty devices by which the young, lovely, sparkling, and highly-intellectual Frederica contrived to elicit something

like sparks from matter that had nothing so kindling as flint in it.

And to do Fanny justice she did not waste it in vain. She not only drew the proper inference as relating to herself, but set about a radical reform, which did her much honour, and a world of good. But if such a process as this takes place at all, it is sure to be accompanied with an increase of love and admiration on the part of the improved towards the improver. And such, indeed, was the case here. Fanny and her aunt, too, very soon began to tell each other that by far the most admirable "foreign wonder" with which their travels had brought them acquainted, was Frederica Rittesberg.

And how did the rejected Henry feel under the influence of this extraordinary girl? Was it possible that his now forbidden love to the beautiful Louisa Selcroft could act as a shield against the fascinations of Frederica Rittesberg?

No. It was not possible. But there was a real, genuine refinement in the character of Henry Harley, which made him shrink from

the idea of so very sudden a transition of affection from one beautiful girl to another. There was something, too, so terrible in the idea of poor Louisa's last hours being disturbed by hearing that he had so soon forgotten her, that he could not endure to think of it. And that she would hear of it, if he gave any outward sign of the fact, was more than probable; for Rome was very full of English, and he was quite aware that neither his own party, nor that of the Baron, were among those who had either the profit or the loss of being too obscure to be talked about.

Week after week therefore crept on, during which he might be said to become every hour more sensible of the fact that what he felt for Frederica did, indeed, deserve the name of love,—such love as may be rationally looked upon and clung to as the faithful light and load-star of life; whereas the feelings of which he had been conscious, under the influence of Louisa's beauty and tenderness, were of a perfectly different nature. Week after week crept on, binding him more closely to Frederica with every passing hour, yet still he

believing that he could offer her a heart v
had never been offered to another.

Whether all this forbearance and all
delicacy would have sufficed to keep him
silent, had he been blessed with vanity en
to guess how truly his love was returne
the innocently-confiding Frederica, ma
something less than doubtful. But of th
had no idea whatever. It was not tha
saw anything in her sweet, frank ma
towards him which suggested the ide
despair. On the contrary, he was fu
hope that when the time should come th
either by the death of poor Louisa, or
intervention of so much time as might rea
ably satisfy his own delicacy, and tha
Frederica likewise—he might venture to
his love, he should find that she would l

Louisa, had conveyed the flattering assurance to his heart that he was beloved almost to idolatry, as everything of this kind was altogether most completely absent, it might be difficult to state precisely what it was that encouraged him thus to hope. Perhaps, despite the resolutely steady absence of every demonstration of love-like sensibility on the part of Frederica, there was some kind of sympathy between them which was more felt than understood, and the influence of which was, perhaps, as powerful as it was secret.

Yet, nevertheless, Henry had never, even to his aunt, or his still dearer sister, breathed a word expressive of the new feeling—it was perfectly a new feeling—which had taken possession of his heart. Nor would he do so—on that point he was determined—till he had first learned from their almost worshipped Frederica that his hope of presenting her to them as his future wife was something more than a vain dream.

By degrees, however, all this restraint became almost intolerable to him, and he had already mentally curtailed the time which he

had first fixed as proper and reasonable, co vinced that the suffering he was endur from suspense was greater than any wh could now be occasioned by precipitat In a word, he had partly well made up mind to take the first favourable opportun of relating to Frederica the history of h former love and engagement, and of the throwing himself upon her mercy, to deci whether such a passage in his existence oug to exclude him for ever from every hope happiness in life.

It happened that, within twenty-four hou after he had formed this important resolutio the baron proposed one of those full-moo rambles among the ruins of the Colisæum, i which fanciful wanderers take such dee delight. The proposal was hailed with ver general satisfaction, and it was speedily agree that they were all to dine together on th morrow at the palazzo P——, in which th Rittesberg family had taken up their winte residence, ordering their carriages precise at the hour which would bring them amid the shades of glory just when the glo-

present of an Italian full-moon should produce the "ebon and ivory" that all the world so loves to look upon.

Madame Rittesberg, among the rest, gave the plan her most cordial support, but she stipulated for one condition, namely, that the baron should forthwith invite two other gentlemen, declaring that neither moonbeams nor torches furnished sufficient security for such an expedition unless every lady had, at her exclusive service, the arm of a gentleman. The baron made no sort of objection, nay, he avowed himself quite ready to confess that he thought a stumble at midnight amidst the ruins of the Colisæum might be a worse business than a stumble upon the Pic du Midi.

Somehow or other it generally happened that, in all their sight-seeing progresses, Henry Harley was the especial companion and attendant of Frederica Rittesberg; and it so happened now,—and so, probably, it generally will happen when both parties are equally well disposed to have it so.

When the carriages which conveyed the party

drew up at the spot where it is customary on such occasions to enter the enclosure, surrounded by these seemingly immortal walls, in order to secure the services of the guide who is appointed to attend upon all who wish to examine their mysterious recesses, Henry Harley eagerly sprang to the ground, that he might be in readiness to give a supporting hand to the ladies as they descended.

But it so chanced that Frederica was the second for whom he performed this obliging service, whereupon, as it seemed, he totally forgot Madame Rittesberg and Lady Frances, who were in the equipage that had not yet drawn up, and appearing perfectly satisfied by seeing his sister Fanny under the arm of the baron, he waited neither for chaperone, torch, nor guide, but uttering some unmeaning observation concerning the excelling beauty of a mass of seemingly impenetrable shadow that frowned in grim blackness before them, he hurried his companion forward towards it, as if their sole object in coming there had been to study the effects of darkness, instead of moonlight.

The inconstant moon, however, was constant enough to her promise of giving light on that occasion to prevent their falling into any yawning dens, or breaking their shins in any pitch-dark vomitaries, the only blunder they made being that they turned to the left instead of turning to the right, as they began to mount towards the higher parts of the majestic ruin, by which accident they soon lost sight of the guide's torch, as well as of their party. But, notwithstanding the deep shade into which some portions of the building were thrown, the moonlight was so unclouded and so superbly brilliant that the absence of torches produced no serious inconvenience; nevertheless, Frederica, who, thanks to her father's exploring propensities, was already almost as well acquainted with the ruin as the guide himself, professed herself fearful of passing one particular spot, where workmen had been recently employed, without the assistance of more light—first, because the place happened to be in very profound shade, and, secondly, because the operations they

were carrying on there rendered the unsafe.

"I saw the light of the torch but a mo ago," said she, "at no great distance fron let us stand where we are for a moment they will be sure to come to us, for we a the broad moonlight, and pretty near visible to them as if it were noon-day."

"Yes," replied Henry, "they cannot fa see us here; and as we do not know in direction they are going, our surest pla joining them will certainly be to wait But I see no reason why we should not ourselves on this very commodious ston they arrive."

"We shall not be the first who ha reposed ourselves," replied Frederica, pl herself on one of the seats of the vast a theatre; "and if my father himself ha about discovering an advantageous point whence to gaze out upon the whole scen could not have found a better. How as majestic in its enormous vastness is this derful relic of barbarous refinement,—

refined barbarity—which shall I call it? When one recollects the hateful horrors for which it was reared, its greatness ceases to be noble—it is only monstrous."

And for a few minutes they conversed together on the uses and abuses of power; and then perceived that the torches, which for some minutes had appeared to be approaching them, were evidently mounting to the upper part of the edifice, making it about equally difficult either to follow, or recall them.

It would have been difficult for any man having so much on his heart that he wished to communicate to one whom accident had thus so commodiously placed beside him, not to have done what Henry Harley now did. It is certain that he had still intended to wait awhile, before he made the communication upon the manner of Frederica's receiving which hung all his future destiny. But the temptation of the moment was too strong to be resisted, and he suddenly determined to communicate to her the melancholy history of his first love, without any further delay, convinced that her manner of listening to it would

at once enable him to judge what hope there might be, that the offering of a heart which must perforce call itself disappointed, might be received, and repaid by the whole of her young unsunned affection in return.

He felt as if the bargain he intended to propose was not an equal one; yet he felt, too, that if he dared tell the whole truth, it would be more nearly so than Frederica, under present circumstances, could believe it to be. But generosity, gratitude, delicacy, all forbad that he should confess to her, or to any one how conscious he, too, felt that no emotion which poor Louisa had ever inspired in him deserved the name of love.

The necessity of this reserve was in itself embarrassing, and still more so, perhaps, was the memory of all the unmistakeable demonstrations of passionate fondness, on the part of the now dying Louisa, which had converted his own admiration of her personal beauty into the feeling that had dictated the offer of his hand. Henry Harley certainly neither expected, nor even wished that Frederica should display the like: he perfectly under-

and sufficiently felt, the impossibility of

; nevertheless the enormous contrast be-
the emotions of the tender creature
eye, almost from the first hour of their
intance, had never met his without be-
g the passion he had inspired, and the
ete and entire absence of everything of
ind on the part of Frederica, could
ly fail of producing a feeling of timidity
s side, which rendered this confession of
mer love painful, and, as he feared,
dous in the extreme.

tle did the unfortunate young man guess
ildly wrong, how completely erroneous,
every way mistaken was the opinion he
ormed concerning the degree of attach-
which these two very different young
n had respectively conceived for him!
indeed, that he had blundered in be-
g that Louisa Selcroft had doted upon
ith all the melting fondness of which her
little heart was capable. But Frederica
atched him, listened to him, and judged

him after a different fashion. She, too, lov
Henry Harley; and not the love of fifty tho
sand Louisas, to borrow the words of Hamle
could have made up her sum.

CHAPTER III.

But of all this Henry Harley knew nothing, absolutely nothing; and there he sat beside her, watching the beautiful outline of her steady profile in the moonlight, one half of the mighty, the overpowering Colisæum frowning upon him in deep shadow, and the other half soberly and delicately bright in the mild radiance of the moonlight. The scene was no bad emblem of his own condition. But still, though the shade was deep, the light was glorious too; and he had at least the consolation of seeing and feeling that he was listened to with deep, with almost breathless attention.

This was encouraging, and Henry Harley

accordingly was encouraged; and now h
reached the *trieste* finale of his first lov
told how sickness had blighted the bea
blossom, how he had been gently but
sively dismissed, and how he had left En
for the Continent, in the hope of reco
his spirits after a trial which it was impo
any man could pass through without suf
a very melancholy impression from it.

He had reached this point, and ha
mained for a moment silent, partly perh
recruit his courage, and partly that he
not lose a single syllable of Frederica's
if indeed it were her intention to make

It may be that the failure of this s
object rather assisted in promoting the
For what could she say? She, Fred
what could she say that would not prove
discouraging than silence? Be this as it
silent she was, and so profoundly still,
Henry fancied he could hear the pulsati
his own heart in the stillness.

Now then was the moment for hi
change his theme, and, having told her
had been, to tell what was.

And he was in the very act of doing so, and had pronounced the words, "I have told you this long and melancholy tale, Miss Rittesberg, that you might know," . . . . when a sudden step and a gay laugh became audible at the distance of half a dozen yards from them.

Henry started from his seat, and many young ladies would have followed his example and started up also. But Frederica sat still, remembering, even at that moment, which nevertheless was a very awful one for her, that there was nothing at all surprising in their not having the Colisæum entirely to themselves on the night after the full moon, that being precisely the time selected by picturesque-loving travellers for paying it a visit.

It is not to be denied that she would have preferred their wandering in another direction on that particular occasion, but she was quite sufficiently self-possessed to remember that this night would have a morrow, and though she had been only listening to a tale of love, of which she was not the heroine, she had, or she

thought she had, enough of hope and hap
to last her till this morrow.

As to her being found seated tête-
with Mr. Harley, while the rest of their
were at a distance, it never occurred to h
a moment that there was anything embar
ing in that. She had not planned the t
tête; neither now, nor ever, had such a p
entered her head, and she knew quite
that the rest of their party would pass h
spot where they had waited for them, as th
turned from exploring the upper tier of a
and this was quite enough to prevent her
ing either alarm or embarrassment, t
Henry Harley was her sole attendant.

The noisy pair who were amusing
selves by each alternately enacting the p
guide, scrambled on into the darkness
Henry and Frederica were again alone; b
conversation broken off by the arrival o
strangers was not renewed, no, not fo
instant, not for a single syllable, for
more rapidly than Henry could have reco
the thread of his discourse, did the lig
the torch which was in attendance upon

friends, gleam upon them; whereupon Henry explained the manner in which they had missed them, and even asked Rittesberg with a tolerably steady voice, whether he thought it would be worth while for them all to turn back in order to show Frederica the arcade above.

"Little you know of Frederica, my dear Harley, if you think she has not been all over the place already. But were it otherwise, we could not indulge her now; for, as I told you when we arranged this expedition, we have an engagement with some old-fashioned German friends to-night, who will, as it is, I am afraid, be inclined to reproach us for being very late."

This was a severe blow to Henry, who, if he had ever heard of this later engagement, had entirely forgotten it, and had for the last few minutes been consoling himself for the untimely interruption of his conversation with Frederica, by the hope that he should be able to resume it before they parted for the night.

The destruction of this hope caused him to utter a sound so very nearly approaching a groan, that the baron positively started, and

turned suddenly towards him with a look of astonishment. But this look was instantly changed for a smile on seeing the woeful expression of Harley's handsome features, for he instantly felt assured that he was jesting, intending in a playful manner to express the disappointment he felt at finding that they were not to pass their evening together; an arrangement so equally agreeable to both families, that but few engagements were permitted to interfere with it.

Frederica too saw the expression which her father mistook for a playful grimace; and timidly, though scarcely doubtingly, put a different interpretation upon it. She felt sure indeed that he had more to say to her, but how could she feel quite sure what it might be? The communication he had so confidentially made to her was a very sad one certainly; and the sequel to it might be a confession that his happiness was destroyed for ever; or it might be—in short it was impossible for her to guess what might have followed it; and when the reader is informed that she only forgot what she was saying twice,

and but a very few moments each time, during the seemingly endless evening that followed, the said reader ought to feel convinced that she exercised a very praiseworthy command over her feelings.

Henry, on the contrary, felt utterly unequal to any effort of the same kind; the idea of sitting down with his aunt and sister to pass the evening in domestic chit-chat, was perfectly intolerable to him. Not for worlds would he have communicated to them the hope that nestled in his heart, till he knew whether it were well founded, or only a baseless vision. And as to conversing on any other subject, he felt that it would be pretty nearly as difficult as giving them a clear and correct explanation of the cause of magnetic influence, or the limits of the powers of electricity.

And so, without telling any positive fibs about engagements elsewhere, he silently assisted them from their carriage on arriving at their own door, and then said, "Good night!" adding, "I dare say you will be both of you in bed before I come back, for I have not had half enough of this moonlight yet." And then

he turned away somewhat abruptly, and with out waiting for an answer, which, to say truth was more discreet than civil, for had he pause for half a moment, poor Fanny, who longe for more Roman moonlight quite as much a he did, would undoubtedly have pronounce the inconvenient words, "Take me with you

But his quick step and resolute purpo saved him from this embarrassment, and the time he had reached the top of the Pinc Fanny had quietly taken off her bonnet a shawl, and seated herself at the pianoforte.

CHAPTER IV.

On the following morning newspapers and letters were brought to them as usual before they had left the breakfast-table. Each of the ladies was happy enough to have a separate despatch, which immediately absorbed their attention, and Henry received a letter too, which, as he did not happen to expect anything extremely interesting, was for a minute examined with that idle sort of curiosity which we often strangely bestow on the outside of a letter, when nothing but a morsel of fragile wax impedes our examination of what is within. But he learnt nothing from the hand writing in which it was directed, though

he fancied, too, that it was not unknowi him ; but if this impression was correct, it at any rate too vague to suggest any dist idea as to who the author might be, and after another lazy glance at the outside, h length performed the manœuvre necessary making himself acquainted with what within. The letter was as follows :—

"My dearest Henry,

"The last time I took up my to address you I had the most painful tas perform that had ever yet fallen to my and I may now most truly say that the upon which I am now engaged is the n delightful that I have ever been called u to execute. Hard, indeed, must that nat be which feels not its own happiness n tiplied a thousand-fold when conscious of power of communicating it to another!

"Dreadful, most dreadful, was the tasl informing you that your lovely and belc Louisa, your affianced wife, the gentle b whose every earthly hope was fixed on dreadful, indeed, was the task of telling

that she was deemed too desperately ill, too likely, in short, to drop into an early tomb, for any father, whose thoughts had more of heaven than earth in them, to permit any engagement to continue which might divert the meditations of the suffering angel from the heaven to which she seemed so certainly approaching.

"That task was mine, dear Henry, and, as you know, I performed it without shrinking, though I thereby lacerated your heart, her heart, and my own! But it was my DUTY, my dear son, and therefore I performed it, and would have done so had it been ten thousand times more terrible—for such is my nature—such the fruit of my unceasing prayers for grace!

"But see the result, my son! See the reward that Providence, by an especial interference, has awarded to me in return for the effort I then made. Your Louisa is restored to you, my dear Henry! A few months of judicious medical discipline has completely removed every alarming symptom, and you will find the dear creature lovelier than ever,

and so brightly happy at the thoughts of your return, that when I look at her I seem to feel as if she had, indeed, made a visit to heaven, and returned to earth embellished by something of almost superhuman beauty.

"We all feel so certain of seeing you among us again without a moment's unnecessary delay, that my wife and Lucy bid me say they will speak, and not write, their congratulations, lest the reading them should impede the preparations for your homeward journey. But our sweet Louisa, my dear Henry, will not be so reasonable, and her entreaties that I should enclose one little word to her affianced husband are too earnest and too affectionate to be resisted. I have therefore promised to enclose the little love-token that she is holding so beseechingly between her pretty uplifted hands, and hasten to subscribe myself,

"Your ever affectionate father and friend,

"WILLIAM SELCROFT."

Will it be expected that I should describe the feelings of poor Harley as he read this

epistle? I hope not. Sure I am that he could not have described them himself. His first object was to steal out of the room before either his aunt or his sister had finished the perusal of their respective despatches. That he might be alone, perfectly alone for a few minutes, was just then the first wish of his heart; and he had almost succeeded in obtaining it, for his hand was already on the lock of the door, when Lady Frances looked up, and catching from the place she occupied a side view of his face, exclaimed in a voice that was more like shrieking than speaking, "Gracious heaven, Henry! What is the matter with you?"

The touch of a straw would have been pretty nearly enough to have knocked him down at that moment, and he had no courage, no energy, sufficient to enable him to persevere in his purpose and escape. He dropped into a chair near him without uttering a word, and pale as a fainting woman, the current of whose life is stopped by violent emotion.

But healthy young men do not easily faint, and Henry was not fainting; on the contrary,

it was he who first spoke. "I beg your pardon!" he said; "I believe I have frightened you both. It is very foolish to be so easily overcome; nevertheless, there is nothing to frighten you. This letter is from Mr. Selcroft —the father of Louisa."

The two ladies exchanged a glance, and shook their heads very pitifully. "Poor thing!" said Lady Frances. "It is all over then, my dear Henry? I have been constantly expecting to hear of it, and you must have been expecting it too, dear Harley! But in a melancholy case like this, the expecti[illegible] the result will not prevent one's feeling it—" Henry did not answer her immediately; h[illegible] wished to do so, he even made the attemp[illegible] but it was a vain one. Again the two ladie[illegible] exchanged glances, but this time the expres- sion was different, for at first they felt quite certain that they understood the cause of his emotion. And in truth nothing could be more natural than that the tidings of Louisa Sel- croft's death should affect him. But a man might be affected, and very strongly affected too, without having his lips become the colour-

shirt, and without such a fearful look of
ent insanity as now glared from his eyes.
nny was exceedingly terrified, and seizing
and drew him towards a sofa, and making
sit down upon it placed herself beside
, and endeavoured to soothe him in the
derest accents.

"For pity's sake, my dearest Henry, com-
se yourself!" said she. "The tidings you
ve received are unquestionably very sad,
ry melancholy; but surely, my dearest bro-
er, you must have been prepared for them.
nd let me implore you, dear, dear Henry, to
mpose yourself, and endeavour to endure
mly, what you have long known to be inevi-
ble. For our sakes, Henry—for your poor
rphan sister's sake, do not suffer yourself to be
completely overpowered by your grief."

If anything could have increased the misery
f this most unhappy young man under the
range species of misfortune which had fallen
pon him, it certainly must have been in-
reased by this most ill-timed harangue. For
did not this view of the case increase his
embarrassment, and increase his misery too a

thousand-fold? Was it not enough
that all the heaven-bright hopes which
been so fondly cherishing, were turned
and bitterness? Was not this enough
the additional pang of knowing also
him sacrifice himself as completely as h
he still could not escape the contempt
odium of the most frivolous inconsta
that too without in the slightest degre
cipating himself from the fatal chain i
the most despicable folly had bound hi

He could not endure to meet the ey
sister, still less perhaps did he wish
counter the steady, questioning gaze
aunt; and with a feeling of cowardi
strangely at variance with his ordina
ings, he started from the seat he ha
compelled to take, and saying in a to
had perhaps more of harshness than w
in it, "You are mistaken, Fanny, as
nature of the news I have received. I
must permit me to leave you for the p
I scarcely know the contents of this
myself. Do not follow me, dear si
really wish to read it and answer it alo

His manner of saying this, though most painfully puzzling, was at least tolerably calm, and both manner and words were such as very effectually to prevent his being followed; so that in the next moment he had at least the satisfaction of finding himself alone in his own room, and with the door securely shut against all intruders.

And then he sat himself down to re-read the terrible letter, while a pang of sharp remorse shot to his heart's core as he groaned under the agony it had brought him.

But the first word of this second reading was enough, and more than enough. He felt as if every syllable of it were already stamped upon his heart in characters of fire. And another penitent groan followed the consciousness of this new agony; whereupon the unhappy man resolutely turned to the inclosure, and read the following lines:—

"I have suffered deeply, deeply, my beloved Henry—not only in body, for I account that little in comparison, but in mind. Need I tell you with what agony it was that I bade you

leave me? Oh, no! I need not describe it to you, my dear, affianced husband—your faithful heart both understood and shared it! But are we not rewarded now for all we have suffered, and oh! how richly rewarded! They tell me, Henry, that I have not lost the prettiness you used to look upon so fondly, and that is a great pleasure to me. I look in the glass now very often, I believe, but it is not from vanity, for I don't think I should care a farthing if all the world thought me ugly, so that you looked at me with the same dear eyes that you used to do when you called me your 'beautiful bride!' Can't you fancy what a delight it must be to write to you again? I feel as if I could go on for ever, but I won't, for one dear word from your own dear lips would be more delightful than writing all the letters in the world! Don't you feel the same about me? If I did not think so, it would be worse for me than all my illness, for I am quite sure that I should die at once. But I know your faithful heart too well to doubt you, my own Henry—neither do I believe that you doubt me; so I will say no more, only

to choose the very fastest horses that
und, and to come back to me as soon
le. But do not make a blunder, and
Barton, for we live at Elmland now,
ıe name of papa's new living. Dear,
rest Henry! Adieu! God bless and
you till you come to your own

ading this letter was a torture so
ng, for a variety of reasons, that
nry had read it through once, he
esperate effort to read it again, as if
penance, the enduring which might
tone for some of his many sins. But
not achieve it; and all that he
r the attempt was, the conviction that
ingenuity of men and women com-
d been employed in the composition
tter, in order to prove both the inevi-
the miserable nature of the net he had
for himself, the result could scarcely
ı more perfectly successful.
ow was he to answer it? This was a
however, that he did not dare to ask

CHAPTER V.

WHEN a gentleman is blessed with a good valet, an accomplished courier, and a well-conditioned banking-book, the act of travelling, even in Italy, is easily, aye, and promptly achieved, if such be the master's pleasure and such his courier's will. The resolves of poor Harley were settled with great rapidity, and no sooner had he made up his mind upon what he intended to do, than the necessary machinery to achieve it was put in action. Horses were ordered, and the carriage packed in much less time than would have been necessary to a traveller less effectively aided; so promptly indeed were his very urgent injunc-

tions for speed complied with, that little more time was left him than was necessary for writing the following letter to his sister :—

"You were, as I believe I told you, my dearest Fanny, mistaken in supposing that Mr. Selcroft's letter announced any bad news respecting the health of his daughter ; it conveyed to me, on the contrary, the assurance of her perfect recovery ; and I have, therefore, at once decided upon returning to England for the purpose of fulfilling my engagement. Matrimony, dear Fanny, is always said to be a very serious affair, and I suppose it is because I find it so, that this unexpected news has made me feel so greatly indisposed to talk about all the preliminaries, even with you and my dear aunt. Besides, talking is a great impediment to moving, and as I am very anxious to lose as little time as possible in returning to England, I have determined to go, without wasting any in saying I am going. Pray tell Lady Frances, with my kind love and duty, that I have left credit for a thousand pounds with Torlonia for your use and hers. We

will arrange all unsettled accounts when y[redacted] return. But do not hasten home, my d[redacted] Fanny, from any idea that your doing so [redacted] be a compliment to me. Rome, you kn[redacted] was not built in a day, nor can it be reac[redacted]e in one, by those who may be seized in Engl[redacted]nd with a vehement desire to revisit St. Pet[redacted]r's. You will, therefore, if you take my advice, remain here, as we intended to do, till after Easter. I will not deprive you of the services of our capital courier, longer than may suffice to return him to you from London to Rome. God bless you both, my dear companions, and believe me now, and for ever, your affectionately attached,

"HENRY HARLEY."

"P.S.—Pray do not forget to remember me kindly to the Rittesberg family. You will, of course explain to them the cause of my so suddenly returning to England."

This letter he himself saw put into the post as he drove through Rome, as the best method of procuring a little delay in its reaching the

nds of his sister, without creating surprise the household by ordering such delay. The nger of their seeing his carriage drive off, s obviated by the sitting-room in which the dies passed their mornings being at the back the house.

It will easily be imagined, however, that e aunt and niece did not remain till this tter reached them, without discussing at very nsiderable length the strange behaviour of Henry on receiving the letter of Mr. Selcroft; or had this conversation, which was perfectly nreserved on both sides, proceeded long, before omething very like the truth was guessed at by both of them. The words he had spoken as he left the room, had been by no means fully understood at the time he uttered them; but now they began to interpret them rightly, and the phrase, "You are mistaken, Fanny, as to the nature of the news I have received," and which had been interpreted into a declaration that, though the tidings were of a very melancholy tendency, yet that, nevertheless, hey did not announce the death of Louisa; ere again and again repeated afterwards, and

as nearly as might be in the accent with w
he had spoken them, till at length a glea
very painful light broke in upon them;
then they both exclaimed, almost at the s
moment, "Is it possible that she can be get
well!"

Feelings of very genuine delicacy
hitherto prevented Lady Frances and
niece from hinting to each other the thou
which had found entrance to the mind
both as to the admiration, if not somet
more, with which Henry contemplated
talents, the character, and the person of E
erica. This admiration was to both a s
of exceeding satisfaction, but both were
contented to wait awhile, quietly watchin
progress of it, without running the ris
being prematurely officious in taking noti
it. Both felt that the manner in whic
former engagement had been broken off,
placed him in a situation to render any o
vations, on a possible inclination on his
to contract a new one, peculiarly objection
and everything of the kind was very care
avoided accordingly. But at this mise

moment, all the hidden thoughts of their hearts burst forth, and instead of forming, as they once fondly hoped, a theme for mutual congratulation and joy, they looked with exceeding misery each into the face of the other, and then Lady Frances exclaimed, "Unhappy boy!" which Fanny tearfully answered with, "Alas! poor Henry!" They understood each other as completely as if his being passionately in love with the young baroness, Frederica, had been openly canvassed between them every day for the last two months.

And then came his farewell letter! Could pity, could sympathy have soothed him, one might regret that he was doomed to remain in ignorance of the feelings that letter produced in the hearts of the friends to whom it was addressed, for most carefully was it all concealed from him in their reply. But this mattered not, for such was his condition, unfortunate young man, that neither their sympathy, nor that of any other human being, could soothe him.

It is needless to follow him through the long journey through which he hurried as if the end

of it were to bring him happiness. But anything seemed better to him than rest, and had Frederica, instead of Louisa, been waiting to greet him at the end of it, he could hardly have performed it more rapidly.

And yet, when he reached London, and remembered that little more than a week had passed since he left Rome, he trembled as the idea occurred to him that he must have been really insane, to have thus wilfully shortened an interval which he would now have lengthened at the cost of many years of life.

But of what use were all such thoughts! Of what use were any thoughts that his sinking spirit and aching brain could engender? There he was in London, and Elmland was within an hour of railroad travelling from him,—and to Elmland he must go, and to Elmland he did go, in a state of mind that might almost have excited pity in the breast of Nero.

Fortunately, however, for himself and for those he was about to meet, Henry Harley was not a selfish man. As he approached the dwelling of the unsuspicious girl who was

iting him with all the happy confidence of ect love, he remembered that the tre- idous sacrifice he was making would cease e righteous if it failed to be complete.

"I have bound myself," said he, in sad, stern soliloquy, "to devote my life to this r girl. My honour, my conscience, my egrity, binds me to her. It was by my insensate will that I became bound, and will wear the chain with a purpose more olute than that with which I forged it."

Perhaps the only favourable feature in his tiny at this time was the rigid firmness intention with which he made this resolu- n, and the strength of character which bled him to keep it.

Let me leave it to the intelligent reader to s the manner of his reception at Elmland; as, in truth, exactly everything that might e been looked for under the circumstances, ender, nay, even impassioned, on the part poor silly Louisa; joyous, and playfully mphant in happiness on that of Lucy; nely affectionate from Mrs. Selcroft; and onstrative in confiding paternity was every

look, act, and word of the exemplary father. It was well for the unhappy Henry that he looked not for any "door to creep out," for, assuredly, he would have found none; everything was so perfectly ready, and so admirably well arranged, that if

> "Fate had fast bound him
> With Styx nine times round him,"

he could scarcely have found escape more difficult.

The only alteration from the original project, as sketched by the fond father, when arranging all the minutiæ of the ceremony, previous to the visit of his friend the Bishop of M——, at Barton Rectory, was that their hands were joined by a neighbouring clergyman, instead of by the bishop himself. But, for some reason or other, Mr. Selcroft had seen much less of his right reverend friend and schoolfellow since his induction to the living of Elmland than before. Perhaps Mr. Selcroft remembered (low churchman as he was) that, although bishops consecrate bishops they do not make them; and with two such

s as Barton and Elmland, no prudent
r of a family would think of giving such
isive little dinners as the bishop used to
at Barton Rectory to any man who had
omething to do with the government.
either the happy Louisa, however, nor
of her delighted family, seemed to lament,
en to be conscious of, the absence of the
sleeves. The wedding, as all the spec-
s declared, was a particularly pretty, and,
ially, a very happy-looking wedding.
pavement of the church was absolutely one
of flowers, and no, certainly, no such
kfast had ever been seen at the Rectory
e—rich rectory as it was. Champagne
pine-apples were as abundant as currant
and filberts upon less splendid occasions;
in short, if an immense deal of show and
de and a superlatively lovely bride could
persuaded Henry Harley that he was a
y man, he would not have wished, so
estly as he did on his return from the
ch to the rectory, that the aching agony
h he felt at his heart might prove fatal.

CHAPTER VI.

THE situation in which Henry's sud
departure had left his aunt and his sister
Rome, was not an agreeable one. They h
by his active agency, as well as by their
inclination, been led into great intimacy
the Rittesberg family, and, what was s
painfully embarrassing still, they had b
led to form a very strong affection for th
. . . . . And now they felt themselves, a
were, left upon them as a legacy by Hen
while he went away to be married, altho
in the very centre of both their hearts th
was a strong conviction that the said He
loved no other woman in the world so de

as he did Rittesberg's only daughter, and, moreover, that Rittesberg's only daughter loved no other man in the world so dearly as she did Henry.

True it was, and they tried hard to find some consolation in remembering it, that no word had ever been spoken by any of them which could justify the Rittesberg family in thinking that, as a marriageable man, Henry had any heart at all; and this was more than once mentioned and dwelt upon, both by Lady Frances and her niece, in the endless conversations which they held together on the subject.

But the good effect of it was considerably tarnished by Fanny's saying, after agreeing for about the twentieth time with her aunt, that *he* had never breathed a syllable like love to Frederica, and *they* had never hinted for a moment at the deep delight they should have felt if he had,—the consolatory effect of this was a good deal tarnished by her adding, "But don't you think, Aunt Frances, that our never naming the fact of his having been engaged to another, will appear strange to

Frederica when she hears of his marriage! She and I were so very intimate, you know."

"Yes, Fanny. The whole business is strange, very strange!" replied her aunt, "and strange it must all appear to every one with whom we have made acquaintance here,—but stranger to the Rittesbergs than to all the rest, of course. But there is no help for it, my dear. Henry has, in contradiction to every principle, and every feeling he ever expressed, entangled himself in a connexion that is unworthy of him in every way, and were it not for the additional misery which the supposed escape from it has brought upon him, I believe I should feel too angry, too much provoked by his folly, to waste another thought upon him. But, as it is, I pity him. With such a creature as Frederica within his reach, the being called home to espouse a resuscitated idiot, for such, I am quite sure, this Louisa will prove, is quite punishment enough to disarm my anger."

"And it shall disarm my anger, too, Aunt Frances," said Fanny, while tears started to her eyes. "Never, never shall I forget the

pression of his countenance the last moment
t I looked at it. But what are we to do
h ourselves, Lady Frances? There is
ıething almost ludicrous in the position
) which we have fallen. Do you not feel
o? I am far from doubting that both you
l I have been valued by these glorious
tesbergs for such good gifts as we really
sess; but can we either of us pretend to
ıbt that our position is greatly changed?
n we ever hope to be as precious to them
ıin as we have been?"

"I should say yes, we may hope it," replied
dy Frances; "nay, I should not scruple to
lare that we might be assured of it, were
not for one reason. Had we ever spoken
this Louisa, and of Henry's former engage-
nt to her, all would have been still right
ween us, as far as you and I are concerned.
t our silence on the subject, yours par-
ılarly, to a friend with whom you were so
nfidentially intimate as Frederica, looks
ry much like laying a plot against her, by
ding her to believe that Henry's heart was
fresh as her own."

"And she will only believe the tru
does think it," cried Fanny, bitte
have been too true to Henry, and
enough to her!"

"It is all too late now, Fanny,
such a discovery useful," returned
"The only choice left us at present is
leaving Rome and remaining in it,'
Lady Frances.

"I shall vote for leaving it!"
Fanny, giving way to the painful i
she had lost the dearest and mos
friend she had ever possessed. "I
I ever bear to see the changed expr
that face? Frederica knows me to
of faults, and she has loved me in
them, but she never suspected me of
hypocrite."

"Nor will she now, Fanny, unless
you injustice," said her aunt. "If F
knew exactly everything that has pas
not believe she would blame you.
right, and for what purpose, could y
told her the half-known history of
Irish love-fit, or the on-and-off eng

hich was its consequence? If it be your eliberate wish to leave Rome, Fanny, I will ot oppose it. But do not let us be pre- nature. Perhaps Frederica may not be quite o much disappointed as our family vanity ads us to imagine."

"Aunt Frances!" returned Fanny, almost ternly. "You are expressing a hope that ou do not feel. We are neither of us dull nough not to have perceived the impression hich these two admirable creatures have nade on each other, and we both of us firmly elieve in our hearts—yourself, Aunt Frances, quite as much as myself—that they are devotedly attached to each other."

"Let us forget it then, niece Fanny, as fast as we can," was the reply. "Frederica is too noble-minded to pine long for a man who must have *appeared* (and that is the best we can say for it,) to have behaved very ill to her."

There was more of truth than of consolation in these words; nor was there, indeed, any great chance that either of them was at all likely to suggest anything that could greatly

tend to comfort the other. A very heavy misfortune had, in truth, fallen on them, which was certainly increased by their not exactly knowing how they ought to behave under it.

They had it in commission from Henry to inform the Rittesberg family of his approaching marriage, and after having decided the question about the time of their leaving Rome by agreeing not to decide it at all till after they had seen Frederica Rittesberg, their next discussion was concerning the manner in which this very disagreeable commission was to be executed. Was it to be announced in full conclave, before the assembled family? Or was it to be communicated to Frederica privately, when there was neither father nor mother near, to mark its effect upon her?

A very little thought upon this point was necessary to decide the question in favour of the private communication; but when the next doubt was discussed, namely, whether it should be Lady Frances or the more confidential friend Fanny who should undertake it, the latter showed the white feather, and

frankly declared that she had not courage for the task.

"Think for a moment, Aunt Frances!" she eagerly exclaimed, "think for one moment, and then say whether such news, uttered in a confidential tête-à-tête by me, would not be worse than the more careless announcement of it which you might so naturally assume?"

"Perhaps it might, my dear," returned Lady Frances, "or perhaps it might not. Is it not possible, Fanny, that the eye of a maiden aunt might be met with more pain, at such a moment, than that of a young sister?"

"But I cannot, Aunt Frances! I really cannot do it!" returned Fanny. "I know so very well that she must think he loves her, and she must know so very well that I, too, think so, that nothing, no, nothing could be so bad as making me tell her of it."

"Well, well, you shall not do it; but neither will I, Fanny," replied her ladyship. "I have just recollected that I promised we would call for her to-day, at three o'clock, to

take her with us into our favourite closet in the canon's chapel at St. Peters, and by far the easiest way to manage this detestable business will be our writing a note; I will undertake that task, informing her of Henry's unexpected departure, which must prevent our keeping the appointment."

"But will you not tell her why he is gone? If you do not, you will not have advanced a single inch!" cried Fanny.

"Do not be impatient, my dear child. Push the writing-desk this way, if you please, and if I do not employ it to your satisfaction you shall have the uncontrolled use of it yourself."

Fanny obeyed in silence, and in a few minutes the following note was submitted to her inspection.

"I am very sorry, dear Frederica, to say that Fanny and I cannot have the pleasure of calling on you this morning, according to our promise. A very unexpected summons has this morning reached my nephew from England, which he felt himself imperatively called upon to obey without delay, and this sudden

parting has left us both too much discomposed for us to feel any inclination to amuse ourselves by listening to sweet music. There are, moreover, circumstances connected with this sudden recall, which are not altogether agreeable. My nephew is (very unexpectedly) about to be married to a young lady, to whom he proposed some time ago, but the marriage was put off, and, as he believed, broken, in consequence of her being supposed to be in a decline. But now, it seems, she is perfectly recovered, and the engagement is resumed. All this, to say the least of it, is very *agitating*, and Fanny and I feel good for nothing. Henry desired that his kind adieu might be offered to your family.

"Believe me, affectionately yours,

"FRANCES MONKTON."

"It is very dreadful that she should receive such a note!" said Fanny, after reading it; "but I do not believe that any better one could be written. Let it go, Aunt Frances, let it go; and we shall soon see what is to happen next, and whether Frederica and I are ever to meet again!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE affectionate heart of poor Fan[illegible] Harley would have been spared many hou[illegible] of aching, had such a gift of prophecy falle[illegible] upon her as might have enabled her to kno[illegible] what the dreaded thing that was to happe[illegible] next between herself and Frederica woul[illegible] really be.

The note of Lady Frances Monkton, which was given in the last chapter, reached the fair girl to whom it was addressed at about half-past two, and at about half-past three the door of her ladyship's Roman drawing-room was thrown open by her servant, who pronounced, with great distinctness, considering

ıe was an Italian, the name of the "Signora Rittesberg."

Fanny Harley first turned very red, and then very pale; and it was while the lily was still predominant, that she once more pressed her lips to the cheek of the friend whom she had fondly hoped to call her sister.

Lady Frances Monkton displayed more self-possession, and welcomed the young lady very much as she might have done had no event of peculiar interest occurred since last they met. But it was the young Baroness Rittesberg who spoke first.

"I am very sorry to find," she said, in a voice which betrayed not the slightest peculiar emotion, "I am very sorry to find that you have been so unpleasantly engaged this morning. Leave-taking is always dismal work; but in your case, my dear friends, I really think you ought to find consolation from the nature of the errand which has robbed you of Mr. Harley. Had you not prevented me, by speaking of it as a misfortune, it is very likely that I might have blundered so greatly as to wish you joy."

It is not, perhaps, a very rare thing for people to listen to words that they do not expect to hear; but it must be rare for so short and quiet a little speech as that made by Mademoiselle Rittesberg to the aunt and sister of Henry Harley, to cause such a degree of astonishment as her words and manner now occasioned them.

They were both of them, however, very sensible women, possessed of considerable self-command, and too much accustomed, as all well-bred people must be, to prevent their own feelings from overpowering their consideration for others, to let this vehement astonishment be perceptible. After the first moment, indeed, her unexpected words, and her unexpected manner, were exceedingly well calculated to put them at their ease, and comparatively speaking, they were so, though the heart of poor Fanny was still throbbing with somewhat accelerated activity, and though there might still be seen a red spot on the olive-tinted cheek of Lady Frances.

But Frederica's visit did not last long. "her mother," she said, "was waiting for her

to make some visits, but I hope," she added, "that nothing will prevent your taking me to our dear St Peter's to-morrow ?"

The aunt and niece both eagerly promised that they would be with her punctually at the appointed time, and then kisses having been again exchanged, she departed.

Lady Frances and Fanny Harley remained standing after the door was closed behind their departed guest, with their eyes fixed on each other's face, and for a minute or two they thus stood staring at each other, without saying a word. At length Fanny, clasping her hands together, exclaimed, "Thank God! that is over !"

"Shall I say you are thankful for small mercies, my dear ?" said Lady Frances. "It does not appear to me that you have got over any very terrible difficulty."

"Her manner has surprised me. Certainly it has surprised me," replied Fanny. "I feel that I do not understand her. . . . But still I am very glad this first meeting is over. . . . I wish I more completely understood her, Aunt Frances."

"It seems that I have the advantage of you in this, niece Fanny," replied her ladyship, gaily; "I think I understand her perfectly."

"Do you?" returned Fanny, doubtingly. "How then do you interpret the perfect composure, the absence of everything approaching agitation in her manner? What has become of all our foregone conclusions?"

"They have melted into very thin air, Fanny! We have guessed, and imagined, and reasoned, and felt, like English women. This young baroness, on the other hand, has reasoned and felt like a thorough-bred Saxon without any mixture of Norman blood," replied Lady Frances, scornfully.

"I know not exactly what you mean," said Fanny, colouring. "But if you attribute anything like a low-minded, interested feeling to Frederica Rittesberg, I differ from you altogether."

"Do not be silly, Fanny, and put yourself in a passion because you find that you have been mistaken in some of your romantic notions respecting the irresistible influence of

andsome brother," said Lady Frances.
had better at once see the thing as it is,
r, as I do. You fancied, Fanny, and I
too, I am not at all ashamed to con-
that your brother had fallen very des-
y in love with this young lady, and that
d fallen very desperately in love with
whereas the truth very evidently is, that
; of the kind had happened to either of
As to your brother, I presume that
made up his mind to the loss of the
ul girl who had so bewitched his fancy
bogs of Ireland, he very rationally
t that the best thing he could do was
uit himself to be bewitched over again
the aqueducts of Rome, and I think
at he was in a very fair way of arriving
agreeable condition, when the news of
iorning reached him. And as to the
lady who has just left us, I take it for
l that having discreetly made all proper
inary enquiries, and finding that Harley
rley Court, was a very suitable *parti* for
e permitted herself to receive his amiable
ons in the manner we have seen. Now,

the interpretation that you put upon
has happened?" said Fanny.

"Yes, it is, Fanny," replied her au
am not only perfectly in earnest, bu
over, I am perfectly convinced that I a
and moreover, under the circumstanc
not know how they could, either of the
acted better."

Fanny's heart was swelling with ind
at this interpretation of Frederica's f
and yet she felt that appearances di
great degree, justify it. She was
neither sentimental nor romantic, b
affections were warm and stedfast, no
she give up as easily as her aunt seeme
the idea that her brother, while so hon
resuming his engagement with Miss S

sincerity that made her take comfort from listening to her interpretation, while she was still vainly endeavouring to forget her own.

It is certain, moreover, that both the aunt and niece felt greatly less miserable than they had done before this unexpected visit; and by degrees they began to talk of their own future plans as if lovers were not the only human beings in the world deserving a thought.

"It certainly would be a great folly for us to run away from Rome without seeing a little more of what it contains," said Lady Frances. "Harley is quite right there: don't you think so, Fanny?"

"Yes, indeed I do," was the very cordial reply. "Whether you are right or not respecting the real feelings of Mademoiselle Rittesberg, it is at least quite evident that the seeing us is not likely to agitate her painfully, and this at least is a great relief to me. Really I do not see any reason, Aunt Frances, why we should not stay till after the Easter fêtes, as Henry proposes. We shall not enjoy them quite so much as if he were with us, but I

shall like to see the Pope give the blessing nevertheless."

"So be it, my dear," returned her aunt, "and I am disposed to hope that although our *beau sire Henri* has not precisely obeyed the invaluable injunction contained in the immortal words :—

> Be sure to get off with an old love,
> Before you get on with a new;

yet, that, nevertheless, his admiring friend and ally, the Baron Rittesberg, will not withdraw his gracious patronage from us, for I know not what we should do without it; he really seems almost as omnipotent here as the Pope himself, and if he has not St. Peter's keys, he certainly has the keys of St. Peter's, or at least, of all its tribunes and choice corners. I wonder, by the bye, what the baron will say to his dear Henry's sudden departure?"

Poor Fanny's brow was evidently overshadowed by this question, and it was clear enough that the whole affair had made a much deeper impression on her mind than on that

f her aunt. In truth, Fanny had watched vith great delight the somewhat singular friendship which seemed so closely to unite the mature Baron Rittesberg and her youthful brother. In her estimation very few people did justice to Henry, and perhaps she was right, for it was scarcely probable that many should discover, under his peculiarly simple and unpretending manner, the extent of his very varied information, or the bold originality of his deeply thinking mind.

But of the baron's appreciation of him she had no doubt; she felt that the younger man was fully understood by the older one, and it was not without a severe pang that she pictured to herself the altered eye with which it was possible he might greet her at their next meeting.

The fact was, however, that, greatly as Fanny Harley admired Baron Rittesberg, and unceasing as had been the pleasure with which, from the very first hour of their acquaintance, she had studied his character, there was still one trait which, if it had not altogether escaped her, had made much less impression

on her mind than many others which
less strongly marked. This trait can
be by described the phrase, *absence of*
which is, however, so often used in
where, comparatively speaking, it does
exist at all, that it cannot suffice as a
cription of the peculiarity of which
speaking.

Had the Baron Rittesberg's early life
spent in learned leisure, and with the
panionship of men to whom the develop
of mind was occupation and enjoyment
might, perhaps, have altogether escaped
peculiarity. The very reverse of this,
ever, had been his early destiny. He
been a soldier before he became a man; h
had begun to be a thinking animal even b
he was a soldier. And what was to be
of such a one when the daily routine o
existence was eating, drinking, sleeping
obeying the roll-call of the constant d
If he had not schooled his mind into
absent from his body, it would very pro
have forsaken him altogether. The imm
activity of his noble faculties must have

him mad, had he not happily discovered that it was possible to *be* in one place and *live* in another. By this system of separating the intellectual from the animal man, he was enabled to do a great deal of head-work while standing bolt upright upon parade; and while punctually obeying the imperative "right about, wheel!" could keep his spirit as immoveably fixed upon some question that he was analytically examining, as if he had been enjoying the deep stillness of cloistcral solitude.

Happily, however, this clumsy way of following the vocation for which he was born did not last long; the legacy bequeathed by his mother emancipated him from his military shackles, and few men have ever lived with more perfect freedom, both of thought and action, than he had enjoyed since; but the habit of letting his mind take flight, and occupy itself somewhere or other where his body was not, still clung to him, and the natural consequence of this was that many things passed before his eyes that he never saw.

Had Fanny Harley been aware of this, she would not have been so much surprised as she certainly was at not perceiving the very slightest trace in the baron's manner when they next met of anything approaching to coldness or displeasure. He expressed briefly, but strongly and affectionately, his regret at Henry's departure, adding, with one of his sweet kindly smiles, the minute after, "I believe him to be as fine a creature as God ever sent on earth, and if the woman he is going to marry be at all worthy of him, she must be very like an angel."

The satisfaction of Fanny in listening to this was quite perfect; no puzzling doubt was mixed with it, as in the case of Frederica, and if anything could have consoled her under her heavy disappointment, it would have been the comfortable conviction that her unfortunate brother (for such she felt he was and must be,) had not lost the affection or esteem of the only man she had ever seen whom she thought worthy of being Henry's friend.

CHAPTER VIII.

NOTHING could have contributed so effectually to the preserving, apparently intact, the close intimacy which had grown between the families of Rittesberg and Harley, as this utter unconsciousness on the part of the baron that anything had occurred to lessen it. For Rittesberg was, in truth, though unconsciously to himself, the main-spring of every movement in which his family were engaged. But it so happened, rather by instinct than on reflection, that he always knew what his wife and what his Frederica would like to do and to see, and this was pretty generally exactly what they did do and see; for, with a

straightforward sincerity, which was somehow or other tolerated in him, though it would have been found full of offence in any one else, he rarely gave up an occupation he liked for one he did not, and thereby contrived to suck all the honey of society without being clogged by the wax.

"Rittesberg says he will!" or, "Rittesberg says he won't!" were the phrases by which his friends recorded his purposed arrangements, and which always included those of his family also. Nobody ever said Rittesberg *cannot* do this or that, it was a phrase he never used himself, nor was it attributed to him by any one acquainted with his ways.

Nature had not made many Rittesbergs, if she had it would be difficult to guess how folks would get on together; but here there was no difficulty at all. He only looked with his kind eyes in the face of those to whom he announced his wishes and his will, bestowing on them, at the same time, one of his indescribably sweet smiles, and straightway his wishes and his will became the wishes and will of the person he addressed; and in this

vast deal of trouble was saved, and
ody was contented.

l thus it happened that very little
ıtion or change of any kind took place
intercourse of these recently acquainted,
ry intimate friends, and even Fanny,
ll her acute discernment, was at a loss
ide completely, according to her own
tion, whether she had or had not been
en in believing that Frederica had
ed the attachment of Henry, and had
ed it. Nothing ever occurred, though
ere perpetually together, either in word,
or look, that could enlighten this
y. Upon one occasion, however, as
ere talking of a rather fatiguing expe-
that had been proposed in the neigh-
od of Rome, Madame Rittesberg said
he doubted if Frederica were strong
to undertake it. The sudden start
hich the observation was heard by the
of it, and the heightened colour with
she replied: "My dearest mother!
an you mean? I never was so good
ter in my life as I am at present!"

startled Fanny, and was the only hint that her affectionate watchfulness ever caught which could confirm her in an idea which had repeatedly tormented her, respecting the health of her still fondly-loved friend. Why did Frederica colour and look almost angry because her mother thought it possible she might be fatigued by a walk of half-a-dozen miles? Was it then possible that all her former suspicions respecting her feelings for Henry had been well-founded, and that her subsequent steadily-sustained appearance of indifference was assumed? And if it were so, should she love her the better or the worse for such wonderful power of seeming the thing she was not?

And so the weeks wore on. The marriage of Henry was announced in the papers, and slightly alluded to by Lady Frances in the presence of Frederica. But if this were intended as an experiment it did not answer, for no eye could detect any variation of countenance, no ear perceive any suspiration that could be likened to a sigh.

And then came the Holy Week, and all

its interesting, but most fatiguing, exhibitions; and Frederica witnessed them all, with every appearance of being much amused, and certainly with less expression of fatigue than might be heard from most people. Still Fanny was not quite satisfied that all this was genuine; but she was very nearly so, and probably would soon have been brought to believe that her original persuasion of Frederica's love for her brother arose solely from her own admiration of him, which certainly often led her to think that it was difficult for any one to see him without admiration, had it not been for one little accidental circumstance which, to say the least of it, still kept her mind in doubt. The accidental circumstance was this.

Lady Frances Monkton and Fanny Harley were dining with the Rittesberg family a day or two after the Easter festivities were over, and the conversation turned, naturally enough, upon the respective movements of the two families as soon as the increasing warmth of the weather should give them warning to depart.

Frances, "but I suppose we should be asha
to show ourselves in England, without ca
ing with us the right of talking of Na
Florence, Venice, and Milan; and I am
sure whether we should not feel a little t
at confessing that we had not even seen I
Blanc, and the Jung Frau."

"And with reason," replied the ba
"but what would you do without Henry
me, if you should happen to have any
adventures?"

"What, indeed!" returned Fanny, eag
adding, with a good deal of feeling, "I
carry home as many boastful adventures a
may, Baron Rittesberg, I shall ever con
that of the Pic du Midi as the most inte
ing of them all."

ne opinion. But never can I forget the nerous, but most disproportioned movement gratitude, the self-forgetting devotion of the ort which your heroic brother made to save e, when he must have felt himself almost in e jaws of death! And so, in fact, he was; r the chances were a hundred to one in vour of his destroying himself, instead of ving me. The boy still fancies that he owes a life to me, whereas the real fact is that I ve mine to him. Let us drink his health, ar Fanny! She who refuses this toast, is no iend to Cæsar—Cæsar, of course, being the rant Rittesberg."

There were several bottles on the table, and ere being no gentlemen present but the ron himself, each lady took the bottle nearest her, and replenished her glass.

The eye of Fanny involuntarily fixed itself on Frederica; it was quite involuntary, for ad she thought for an instant about it, she ould have avoided her eye, instead of seeking But this blameable thoughtlessness was unished by seeing the pale, but ever beautiful atures of her friend express for one short

moment a feeling of agony that it was dreadful to behold. It was but for a moment, however; she recovered herself by an effort that must have cost her much, and succeeded in filling her glass to the brim with a steady hand: and then poor Fanny, whose heart was wrung by this terrible confirmation of all her worst fears, endeavoured to atone for the culpable thoughtlessness which had turned an eye upon her at such a moment, by overturning her own full glass, and producing a sufficient degree of confusion to attract all attention to herself, and the mischief she had done.

Nor was this quite all which occurred before they parted, tending to leave on the mind of Fanny Harley the terribly painful conviction that the happiness of the friend she most dearly loved had been injured, if not for ever destroyed, by the same act that she felt equally certain would destroy that of her brother also.

The summer plans of the whole party were again under discussion, when the baron said in reply to a question from Lady Frances a

what part of the known world he intended honour with his presence, "If I am a true an, Lady Frances, I must go to the Holy and."

"Must go?" she replied, "what is there so solute in the matter?"

"Only the absolute necessity of keeping the omise which I pledged to myself some enty years ago. Yes," he continued, "it is ther more than twenty-five years ago; but have neither forgotten it, nor do I feel any clination to fail in its performance. At the me I refer to I had but recently shaken off e thraldom of my particularly detested mili- ry profession, and having very gravely and tionally resolved to visit all the quarters of e earth, I jotted down 'Jerusalem' very early my list of cities, but one accident after nother caused me to anti-date my pilgrimages various other places, less interesting, erhaps, but more tempting at the moment. ut this was not done without a vow as sin- ere as any that ever was made on the same ubject, that I would, if life were not cut hort, bend my knee at the Holy Sepulchre

before I was fifty years old. This term has very nearly overtaken me, and therefore, fair lady, to return to the point whence I set out, if I be a true man, I must go to the Holy Land."

"And what does the baroness say to it?" demanded Lady Frances, turning towards the lady.

"I think I shall like it quite as well as another long journey," she replied.

"And what does Frederica think about it?" said Fanny.

"My approval goes further than that of mamma," replied Frederica, speaking with more than usual animation, "for I think I should like it better than any other journey either long or short."

"And I agree with you," replied Fanny; "I know no journey that I think would interest me so greatly."

"Then why in the world should we not join parties, and go together?" said the baron.

Fanny coloured with sudden pleasure at the proposal; but she silently looked at her aunt, as she felt that the answer must come from

her, and she read in the smile with which she listened to the proposal, nothing that looked at all like a wish to refuse it.

And then Fanny looked at her friend, and at that moment perhaps, thought more of what she believed were Frederica's feelings towards herself, than of any which poor Henry might have inspired.

It would be difficult to say whether sorrow or astonishment was the most prominent sensation in her mind, as she beheld the countenance of Frederica when she thus turned her eyes upon her. Her small brow was suddenly contracted by a frown; for a moment she became as red as scarlet, and then as suddenly turned pale. In a word it was utterly impossible to look at her and not to perceive that the proposal of her father was, in the very strongest degree, distasteful to her.

The eye of Lady Frances had followed that of her niece, and as it was quite impossible to mistake the effect which the proposition had made upon Frederica, her ladyship, who amidst many admirable qualities had some

slight mixture of the failing called
felt offended in no slight degree, and ab
rising from her chair in order to tal
leave, was preparing to say something
might have had more severity than civi
it, when she was stopped by Fanny's su
exclaiming, "Alas, alas! dear baron!
is impossible! My last letter to my b
gave him a most positive promise of ret
to England at a much earlier period
would be possible, were we to listen t
most delightful proposition."

It is very possible that Lady Fran
the first moment, thought her niece co
ably more civil than was necessary; but
next, however, upon their entering thei
riage together, she said, "I am very glad
civil speech stopped my rude one, Fanny
after all the pleasant hours we have
together, I should be very sorry to pa
the Rittesbergs with anything like co
But upon my honour I am astonished a
forbearance. After all the affection yo
shown that strange girl, it was rather try

see her look as if she were going to faint because her father proposed that we should join their travelling party."

"Yes, Aunt Frances," replied Fanny, "she certainly did look as if she were going to faint. But is it possible that you could have looked at her at that moment, and not have seen the anguish that her countenance expressed?"

"Anguish? You use strong language, my dear. And how do you explain her suffering anguish in consequence of the baron's proposal?"

"I account for it," replied Fanny, "by believing that she shrinks with dread from everything that may keep alive the memory of Henry in her heart."

"How can you talk such intolerable nonsense, Fanny?" exclaimed Lady Frances. "Have you forgotten her demeanour on the morning she first received the news of Henry's intended marriage?"

"No, Aunt Frances, I have forgotten nothing—excepting, perhaps, my own blundering explanation of that demeanour. I am now, *at last*, convinced, yes, perfectly convinced, that I

misunderstood her then, and that I d misunderstand her now. Trust me, Frances, I read the riddle right when that Frederica's acquaintance with Hen destroyed her happiness."

"Fanny, Fanny, you are talking like young lady, indeed! How comes it, you, that neither father nor mother ha slightest idea of this fatal attachment?"

"As to the mother," replied Fanny, " a very charming person in many way you must be as well aware as I am, tha seeing what is not yet in sight, is not a her accomplishments. Does she ever tal eyes off her worsted-work?"

"And is the father as unspeculative a mother?" demanded Lady Frances.

"Unspeculative? No!" returned F smiling; "I do not mean to accuse hi having his spirit lapped in Berlin-wool. nevertheless, he is extremely capable of c ing his speculations so far a-field, as to r him incapable of seeing what is very him. And so only, my dear aunt, ca account for the blindness which prevente

seeing what you well know was so very visible on both sides, before our poor Henry was recalled. As most certainly he never saw what was going on then, there is nothing very extraordinary in his not perceiving what the unhappy girl is suffering now."

Lady Frances looked vexed, and almost angry.

"I never fancied you a romantic Miss till now, Fanny," she said, "and as to the sufferings you talk of, I believe you to be utterly mistaken. It may be very likely that this young lady intended to run up a flirtation with my handsome nephew, and it is very likely also that she may be more than half inclined to quarrel with us all, because he took himself off. But as to her having ever felt any portion of the serious attachment which we once gave her credit for, and then worked ourselves up into such a panicism of tender pity on her account; you never will persuade me of its existence again, my dear, unless you can contrive to make me forget her lively entrée into our drawing-room that morning; so let us agree to say no more about it, my dear

child. Trust me she has no feelings Henry, or about you either, that will her any harm."

It was with considerable difficult Fanny checked the tears which she fel to her eyes at hearing such a finale pror to the only strong friendship she ha formed out of her own family; but sh her aunt too well to wish to be classed as a "romantic miss," and this feeli strong enough to render her efforts to composed perfectly effective.

Lady Frances then turned the conve on their own homeward journey, and point they appeared to be very p agreed. They were neither of them great haste to be presented to their ne tion, and it was finally agreed betwee that they should devote the coming sum seeing all that Henry had proposed t them in Italy, and then pass the winter in Paris.

CHAPTER IX.

HENRY meanwhile, was very steadily, very resolutely, and very quietly settling down into a married man. The few ornamental alterations which had commenced at Harley Court, were very speedily completed, and few young brides, with a happy bridesmaid sister to double their satisfaction by sharing it, ever took possession of a new home about ten times as splendid as they had ever had any right to hope for, with more entire satisfaction.

Henry Harley was not a man to keep the word of promise to the eye, and break it to the sense. If the power had been left him of making the choice (without sin) between

making his beautiful Louisa a happy
leaving her a richly endowed widow
highly probable he would have prefer
latter; but he had not so learned the d
Christian man, and instead of medita
Frederica and the easiest means of e
from a state of existence in which sh
could have any part, he endeavoured,
the sincerity of a truly honourable na
render the silly young woman, to wl
idle fancy of a summer day had united
really happy, as he really was hims
reverse.

The task of bearing his own heav
about under a smiling countenance, v
always easy to achieve, but that of
Louisa smile with the most genuine
from morning to night, was perfectl
With one of the handsomest houses i
land, and one of the sweetest temper
own, with a husband of whom she
proud as she was of her house, and
clever, good-humoured sister who doat
her, and who knew perfectly well
awaken the dormant faculties of her

ne morning, in company with
:ss, exclaimed, "How mamma
ld delight in seeing all this,
ld you not like to invite them
)r a week or two?"
an anything in the world!"
fectionate Louisa, with great
ow can we manage it, Lucy?"
, my dear! What a question!
; make him do anything? Let
library, presently," added Lucy,
t smile, "and see if we come
out a beautifully-worded com-
ts learned master to despatch
-night's post, inviting Mr. and
o honour Harley Court with as
possible."
elightful idea!" responded the
Harley, clapping her hands in
ink how papa will enjoy seeing
, house of my own! And such
ıd such a quantity of servants,

ı how dear mamma will glory

splendid place, Harley Court, and the husband of her beautiful sister, was so profoundly miserable that he would have welcomed most joyfully the assurance that he should not survive the year, and that, could the alternative have been offered him of remaining in his present condition, or becoming the bachelor possessor of a tiny curacy amidst the mountains of Wales, he would have preferred the latter.

Greatly, very greatly to his honour was it that nobody knew or even guessed at his actual condition. For the first month or two after their arrival at Harley Court, the well-dressed, happy sisters had enough to do in receiving and returning the visits of the neighbourhood, in accepting and dressing for (Oh that dear delight!) invitations to dinner, and then in returning them, and in showing off finer rooms and finer dinners in return.

When this was over, the two ladies would probably have been perfectly well satisfied to begin it all over again, with the assistance of a few milliners' packages from London; but a great improvement to this plan was suggested by Lucy, who, when walking through the

ry one morning, in company with mistress, exclaimed, "How mamma would delight in seeing all this, Should you not like to invite them e here for a week or two?"

Better than anything in the world!" lied the affectionate Louisa, with great cerity. "How can we manage it, Lucy?"

"Manage it, my dear! What a question! Might you not make him do anything? Let us go into the library, presently," added Lucy, with a pleasant smile, "and see if we come out of it without a beautifully-worded commission from its learned master to despatch letter by to-night's post, inviting Mr. and Mrs. Selcroft to honour Harley Court with as early a visit as possible."

"What a delightful idea!" responded the beautiful Mrs. Harley, clapping her hands in delight. "Think how papa will enjoy seeing me with such a house of my own! And such carriages! And such a quantity of servants, Lucy!"

"And think how dear mamma will glory

at seeing you so very, very happy!" cried her sister.

But after the interval of a moment Lucy added: "There is but one thing, Louisa, that makes me feel as if it would be a little awkward for you to propose this. I am sure I don't know, the least in the world, where his aunt and sister are, for he never talks of them, and therefore I don't believe that he can be very fond of them; but that's no matter, and I think that before you say anything about papa and mamma you ought to make some civil little speech about his sister. Her ladyship, the aunt, I suppose, is a prodigious grandee, and will come when she pleases, neither sooner nor later; but about his sister I do think you should say something."

"Should I?" returned Louisa, looking rather frightened. "What ought I to say, Lucy? I'm sure I don't know."

"No very long harangue, dearest," replied her sister, laughing. "The slightest word would be quite enough, I have no doubt."

"But what do you mean by the slightest

word?" returned Louisa, knitting her fair brow, and looking puzzled.

"Oh! anything! Suppose you say that we have just been through the conservatories, and that they are in such beautiful order that you think it is quite a pity his sister should not come and see them."

"Oh, yes! that will do beautifully!" cried Louisa. "I am ready to go this very moment, if you will. Dear, darling Henry is so very kind to me, that I should not mind asking him for anything. Only, you know, it is so much pleasanter before one begins to know exactly what one means to say."

"To be sure it is, darling," returned Lucy, fondly patting her cheek. "And when you have said that, and listened to his answer, I think you may very easily go on, and say something about papa and mamma, and how very delightful it would be to show this beautiful place to them. And if you want to make very sure, dearest, of a most particularly amiable answer, I should recommend your just favouring your lord and master with the most delicate little kiss in the world, given just in

the middle of his handsome forehead, perhaps —and I, you know, might be looking the other way."

In reply to this lively sally, Louisa shook her head with the prettiest air of matronly discretion imaginable.

"No, no, Lucy, dear!" she said; "you don't know what you are talking about. When you come to be married yourself, which I'm sure I hope you will be before it is very long, you will understand all that sort of thing a great deal better than you do now. Of course, I don't mean to say that all men are exactly alike, that would be quite nonsense you know; but I suppose that every woman when she is married learns to find out what is the best way with her own husband. Of course, there is nobody can doubt but that my dear darling Henry is most devotedly attached to me, for why else, you know, should such a man as he is, with this magnificent place and all his splendid property, have ever thought of marrying me? But for all that, I am quite sure and certain that he would not like my being vulgarly free with

him in my manners. Of course, he must always have been used to everything in the very highest style, and by what I can judge, by his particularly elegant and delicate manners to me, he does not approve that sort of low, common love-making way that one could fancy, you know, between servants and other common people. I dare say all such sort of people would call him cold and stiff in his manner; but I understand him better. He is certainly a proud man, Lucy, and, notwithstanding all his kindness and attention to me, I can't help seeing it. But I am quite sure that I ought to admire him the more for it, and that is only a proof how very superior and gentlemanlike he is. But that is no reason, you know, why I should not ask him about dear, darling papa and mamma, but quite the contrary, indeed, for, at the very same time that his manner is what some people might call proud and stiff, he takes the very greatest pains to make me understand that he wishes me to have and to do everything in the world that I like."

"And if that does not content you, Louisa,"

replied her sister, "I am sure you never ought to be contented at all. So let us try our little experiment without farther delay, and I'll bet you what you like, poor as I am, that we shall have papa and mamma here before the end of the month. But remember, my dear, that you are to say a little word about the sister first."

CHAPTER X.

FROM the conservatory the two happy ladies passed, arm-in-arm, to the library, and there, as they expected, they found the master of the house reading.

With the most amiable politeness he immediately laid his book aside, and rising from his chair, which was placed at a table in the deep recess of a window, met them in that part of the noble room which seemed to be neutral ground between chit-chat and study; for several luxurious arm-chairs and an inviting sofa to boot, were placed there around an ample table, covered with the periodical publications of the day, and exhibiting, more-

over, every imaginable accommodation for writing.

"Are you come to look for any particular book?" said Henry, directly addressing neither, but appearing to expect an answer from Lucy.

And it was Lucy who replied, by saying, "Yes, Mr. Harley, I want you to permit me running away with the last 'Quarterly.'"

He looked among the miscellaneous collection upon the table, and almost immediately presented it to her.

"We have just been walking through the conservatory, Henry," said his wife, "and, upon my word, it is the most beautiful thing I ever saw. What a pity it is, dearest Henry, that your sister should not come here to see it while it is in such perfection! The gardener says she is so very fond of flowers."

At the mention of his sister he started as if he had seen a ghost; and yet there was no danger of her coming there to haunt him with memories of the past, for she was far away.

He remembered this without any great loss of time, and quietly replied, "It is very obliging of you to wish for her, but it will be

ong, I suspect, before she revisits England. She and my aunt are projecting a residence abroad of considerable duration."

"Do they, indeed! Dear me! Only fancy! But I do declare, Henry, that I long to show the flowers to somebody. Should you mind papa and mamma's coming to see me here for a little while?"

"Of course, dear Louisa, I should be very happy to see them," he replied.

"Oh, thank you!" she exclaimed, with more of gratitude than of dignity in her manner. "Isn't that nice, Lucy? Then I may write and ask them directly, may I?" she added, addressing her husband.

"Certainly you may," he returned, making an effort to speak cheerfully.

"Well, then, I shan't delay a single hour. Come along, Lucy! Thank you, a thousand times, dear Henry! It will be so nice! Only fancy!"

Was it self-reproach, or was it shame, or was it despair, that caused the master of that luxurious room to sigh as if his heart were

bursting when his beautiful young wife closed the door behind her? He felt that he was guilty; but guilty of he knew not what. Guilty of being miserable in a situation that would have made so many other men happy. But how could he mend the fault? How could he atone for it? By living to endure it through long years of little, wretched, miserable hypocrisy! This was the mental answer to the mental question. Nor was there any other to be hoped for.

Poor, good-natured, pretty Mrs. Harley kept her word; she lost no time, but immediately wrote such an affectionate letter to her parents as brought them to Harley Court in time for Lucy to win her bet hollow, if she had made it.

Mr. Selcroft, together with Mrs. Selcroft, and the lady's maid, and the gentleman's man, arrived in as good style as railway travelling would permit, at the station nearest to Harley Court, within ten days after the invitation was written. It would really have been a pleasing sight for any one who knew nothing *dessous les cartes*, to witness this first meet-

ing between the parents and their happy daughters.

Louisa's pride in all her finery was of so childish a character, and so frankly displayed, that it would have been almost impossible for such a one to laugh at her for it, or, at any rate, it must have been a good-natured laugh, for her pride had nothing pompous in it, but was as pretty and as comic as that of a child.

To say that the almost stately Rector of Elmland was pleased by the splendour of the quarters in which he found himself, is using weak phrase to describe a very strong sen-tion. But, notwithstanding his great and eeply-felt satisfaction at beholding the noble ode of his daughter and all its appurte-nces, he would have been more completely tisfied still had the master of the house, his ighly-considered son-in-law, been there to ronounce his welcome.

But for this he was to wait a little longer; ery particular business, as Louisa told him, having taken dear Henry to some place in the

neighbourhood, from whence he feared he should not be able to return till just in time to dress for dinner.

This was unfortunate, but, of course, it was nothing but an unavoidable necessity that could have kept the happy master of Harley Court from home at such a moment, and an unavoidable necessity must always be submitted to with resignation.

Such were the words, and such the feelings of Mr. Selcroft, as he listened to his daughter's apology for the absence of her husband; but he very soon became so exceedingly comfortable and happy, while, without restraint, he looked at everything, examined everything, and asked the most intelligent questions about everything, that if he had spoken the whole truth he must have confessed that he was enjoying himself vastly more than he could have done had his highly-respected son-in-law been at home.

The train which had brought them from London had reached the station in time for the Harley Court carriage, which was waiting

for it to convey the Harley Court father and mother-in-law to the mansion in perfectly good time for luncheon.

If Louisa herself had not as much skill in the art of display as some more meditative spirits may boast, Lucy's heart and head combined supplied all her deficiencies. It may be fairly said that she thought of everything that could assist in giving effect to the display which she wished should be made before her very truly beloved father and mother, of all the wealth and all the elegance which had been achieved by their fondly-doated-upon Louisa through her marriage.

We often talk of *mixed motives*, and the phrase is a very correct one; but this mixture, if philosophically examined, would often be found more curious and interesting than we imagine. Perhaps there is scarcely any feeling that we class more lowly than vanity, and what but vanity was it which made Lucy, like the main-spring, and Louisa, like the index, display, with so much industry of parade, the grandeur of Harley Court? And yet there was mixed with this, and in very large pro-

portion, too, such an amount of filial affection as rendered the weak folly more than pardonable,—it rendered it absolutely touching and interesting.

Viewed in this light, it was positively beautiful to see the keenness with which Lucy watched the effect of all the fine aristocratic usages with which her parents had become just sufficiently acquainted to know their value, yet not sufficiently familiar to lessen their effect.

And nothing could be prettier, under this same affectionate rose-coloured influence, than to watch the unceasing smile of Louisa, as one domestic elegance was displayed after another.

And when all this was over in the dining-room, they moved on to the drawing-room; their first reception having taken place in Mrs. Harley's exquisite boudoir. And after the drawing-room had been minutely looked at and suitably admired, Lucy said, "Louisa, dear, this is not half so proper an atmosphere for dear papa as the library." Whereupon the family party moved on to the library, and

then they looked about them, till both father and mother enjoyed the great happiness of feeling that, in all the expensive efforts they had made to set off the charms of their Louisa, they had done their duty, and that no one had ever married a daughter in a manner more completely satisfactory.

And it was in the library they sat down to have a little quiet confidential family talk; not that the parents had the very remotest idea that Louisa was not the adored wife of her adored husband, but both Mrs. Selcroft and Mr. Selcroft felt anxious to know how their darling girls liked the neighbourhood, and perhaps their questionings were not without some latent wish to discover whether there were any more Harley Courts within reach, that might do for Lucy.

On that particular point, however, they did not obtain any very satisfactory information, but this was tolerably well atoned for by their being informed that the Bishop of D——, decidedly, as Mr. Selcroft declared, the most influential prelate on the bench, had secretly

purchased a place in the neighbourhood
account of its vicinity to the sea, the
having been particularly recommended for
of his daughters, who was thought to be
declining health.

"And have you met this remarkable
yet, my dear girls?" demanded Mr. Selcroft

"Oh dear, yes, papa," replied Lucy.

Louisa was by this time deeply engaged wi
her mother in a little muttering conversatic
on a distant sofa; but her elder sister w
perfectly competent to give all the informatic
which her father was so anxious to obtai
without being assisted by any observation b
her own.

Her father was quite aware of this, and w
by no means displeased at the sort of doul
tête-à-tête into which the conversation h
fallen; for in addition to the admiration whi
he had always felt for his eldest daughte
acute powers of observation, he had a sort
under-current of respect for her veracity, thou
it had sometimes given him a good deal
trouble in days of yore, but which at any r

made her statements concerning matters of fact invaluable, though it might have occasionally interfered with his own practice.

"Now then, my dear Lucy," he began, "tell me exactly everything you have observed in the Bishop of D——. He is not at all like, even in manner, is he, to my old friend the Bishop of M——?"

"Not the least in the world, papa! No two men can be more different, at least as to their outward and visible notions. But I have my doubts whether at heart a very grandee bishop of one sort, is not very like a grandee bishop of the other. Don't be angry, dear papa! You know you told me that I was to say exactly what I thought."

"Exactly so, Lucy. Go on, my dear. What do you mean by saying that all bishops are very like."

"I did not say that, papa," returned the accurate Lucy. "And how could I? For have I not seen the poor dear little Bishop of B——, who seems as if he thought he ought to wipe the dust off everybody's shoes? and have I not seen the Bishop of P——, who

not all alike. They wear their laws
with a difference. What I said wa
a very influential bishop of low churc
ciples, and a very influential bishop
church ditto, were very likely to re
each other in their notions of what is
them in the way of respect and deferen

Mr. Selcroft indulged in a gentle smi
replied, "Very likely, my dear."

Thus encouraged, Lucy rejoined,
rather amusing to me, papa, who hav
brought up in other principles, you k
hear all church ceremonies talked of ex
if they were of the most vital importanc
weal or woe of human souls; and one
the word election was used in a religiou
in his lordship's presence, he first made

most dignified of attitudes, fixed his angry eyes upon the ceiling, and began fingering his watch-chain and seals, very much, I thought, as if he had been fingering a rosary."

Mr. Selcroft smiled again.

"And then their waistcoats, papa," proceeded Lucy. "His chaplains actually roll themselves up in black silk; and when you come to see the shape of their coats, I am positive you will ——"

"Do not be positive about anything, my dear Lucy," said Mr. Selcroft, interrupting her, but very smilingly; and with an air of the most confidential unreserve. "These mummeries, my dear child," he continued, "these mummeries grow upon us so rapidly that they become important, perhaps, though conscientiously speaking, they can never in our judgments become respectable. If I have the honour of being introduced to his lordship the Bishop of D——, you will not see me disposed to laugh at the coats or the waistcoats either of any of the reverend gentlemen, by many of whom, I am told, he always likes to be attended, keeping them standing about him somewhat in

the style of a court. All this sort of thing new to us, Lucy, but it does not necessar follow that it is therefore wrong. Moreo it is a wise proverb which says, 'When Rome, do as the Romans do.'"

It was now Lucy's turn to smile, and s showed her handsome teeth from ear to ear.

"Why papa, dear!" she exclaimed, "yo have positively outrun the bishop, for you hav got to Rome already!"

But this time her little pleasantry di not seem to be so agreeable, for her fath frowned.

"Come, come, Lucy!" said he, rath sharply; "do not let me find that you ha been learning to be vulgar and flippant, sin we parted. You are much too clever, if y will do yourself justice, not to take things, a people too, as you find them, and make t best and the most of them, such as they a The Bishop of M—— has put me in posse sion of the excellent living on which I n reside, to which fact you may very fai attribute the great match which our darli Louisa has made. Now the fact is, Luc

that I love you, quite as well as I do Louisa, and a deep sense of duty, as well as my strong affection for you, leads me to feel that I should be guilty of a great sin, did I neglect any opportunity of so elevating my condition as to give you, my dear child, every possible facility for forming a connexion perhaps more brilliant still."

"Oh, dear papa!" replied Lucy, half playfully, half affectionately; "I am very well as I am! Don't wear a tight little black silk waistcoat buttoned behind, merely in the hope of getting me well married! You will never look half so handsome again if you do, and I assure you I should be very sorry for that."

Mr. Selcroft shook his head, and looked grave.

"I do very much wish, my dear girl, that you would leave jesting for a few moments, and let me talk to you seriously," said he. "Tell me, Lucy, have you ever heard your brother-in-law refer to his disagreeable conversation with the Bishop of M——, the day he met him at Barton?"

"No, papa, never. And I very much doubt

if he has ever thought about it since," replied Lucy.

"I am glad to hear it," said Mr. Selcroft. The bishop expressed some of his peculiar opinions, I believe, by what he said to me afterwards; and I should be sorry if they had made any deep impression on the mind of Mr. Harley."

"You may set your heart at rest on that subject, dear papa," replied Lucy, gaily; "for I do not think that sort of thing is likely to make any impression upon him at all."

"You must not learn to speak lightly on such subjects, Lucy, for you may be very sure, my dear, that there is no bishop of any party who would approve *that*, nor any other good person either, of course; and it is with no light or irreverent feeling, but very much the contrary, that I wish you to tell me everything you know, and everything you have heard, about the Bishop of D——."

Lucy looked very much as if she were inclined to laugh again, but she thought better of it, and replied with becoming gravity. "Were I literally to tell you, dearest papa, all

heard since I came here, about the
of D——, we should neither of us have
dress for seven o'clock dinner. He is
ly the great man, *par excellence*, of this
urhood, and yet, neither in the imme-
eighbourhood nor in the county gener-
there any deficiency of esquires and
high degree."

at exactly agrees, Lucy, with what I have
before," said Mr. Selcroft, drawing his
little nearer to hers, and lowering his
little. "The fact is, you see, that he
the sister of ——;" and here his voice
low as to be inaudible even to his
e daughter, nevertheless, she did not
t him, for she knew all that before.
this, my child," he continued, "is a
different sort of interest from that of a
o is a bishop, and only a bishop. As
etting a good living goes, or even as far
ing two, a well-placed bishop has it
ore in his power to be useful to his old
or his old *acquaintance* as they call us,
prince of the blood royal. But beyond
bishop, as a bishop, can do nothing.

Then comes the cabinet work, my child."

"Cabinet work? dearest papa! Wha that mean when you are talking of the bishop can do?" said Lucy, innocently.

Mr. Selcroft looked at her keenly, a suspected she were quizzing him; hc she stood the examination well, and he g replied, "Of course, child, by cabinet v mean work done in the cabinet of a m of state. It is there, Lucy, that l themselves are made—and deans also."

"Oh, yes! I know that too," she r "and if you really have anything of th in your head, I am glad you set me tall the Bishop of D ——, for I have he much about him, that I can certainly gi a hint or two. And moreover, papa, tell you that he is coming to dine her Wednesday."

"Really!" returned her father. Lucy, I confess I shall be very much p to meet him. But what was it you were to tell me about him, my dear? I wish you to be as particular as p

in repeating to me everything you have heard."

"I believe it may be pretty nearly all summed up in one sentence, papa. His aversion to the low church knows no bounds. They say that his lordship's father was rather *ultra* in that way; and that being over dosed with the doctrine in his early youth, he took a surfeit from which he never recovered."

Mr. Selcroft did not vouchsafe a smile to this sally, but neither did he appear greatly offended at it. He continued his inquiries respecting this important personage in the most matter-of-fact manner, and when he had heard all that Lucy was able to tell, he brought the interesting discussion to a conclusion by saying, "Of course, Lucy, you must be aware that you have told me several things concerning this celebrated man which I neither do nor can approve; nevertheless, it is my decided purpose to treat him not only with all the respect due to his high station, but with that sort of distinction which his influential position in the country demands.

In doing this, my dear, it is very possible that I may appear to have changed some of the opinions which you have heard me advocate, and should this happen, remember that I demand it of you as a proof of the respect which a child must always owe to a parent, that you give me credit for having good and sufficient reason for my conduct, although such reasons may not be obvious to you. Remember, also, my dear Lucy, that one of the most precious articles in the blessed code in which I have especially instructed you, is that the happy Christian once called, can never be permitted to fall away. And it is for *this* reason, my child, that we are often, by the blessing of God, permitted to work for holy ends by means which less assured Christians might fear to employ. Such being the case, I expect that, whatever I may do or say, you will give me credit for doing and saying it for the ultimate glory of the Lord, and his saints."

In reply to this, Lucy meekly bent her head in silence; and, to do her justice, she did not feel the least inclination to laugh.

The sofa conference between Mrs. Selcroft and

elcroft and Lucy, agreed to a pro-
de by the former that they should
nto the tempting garden for half-an-
so, before they retired into their
rooms in order to dress for dinner.

CHAPTER XI.

THE meeting of Henry with the fa
his wife was, like everything else he r
a painful effort which drew upon h
courage to sustain it to a degree tha
to threaten the exhaustion of that m
age more severely than many efforts
more seeming difficulty could have d

The most painful symptom of h
condition, perhaps, was the sort
languor that he was conscious w
over him. He felt much as a w
indolent, useless, fine lady may d
seemingly surrounded with ev

ı make life enjoyable, declares that she has pirits for nothing."

Neither Mr. Selcroft nor Mrs. Selcroft, how-r, discovered anything of the kind in his de of receiving them. They were con-ous, certainly, that his manners were not te so light and airy as they had fancied m to be when they first made his acquaint-e on the shores of Killarney; but they nei-r of them saw anything very extraordinary this. A very young man, very violently in e, was likely enough to appear in a state of usual excitement and animation, not to men-a, as Mr. Selcroft very sensibly observed, t it would be by no means becoming for a n in the station which it was evident . Harley held in his county, to retain the nners of a lively boy after marriage had verted him from the youth of fashion into man of consequence.

But even if his clever father-in-law had n less satisfied then he really was by the nner of his reception at Harley Court, the e of that Harley Court itself, was more n enough to atone for every deficiency. In

truth, the simple, unpretending manner o Henry in speaking of his paternal home had suggested no idea of its splendour, and any on who had watched Mr. Selcroft, as with almos regal dignity of step he walked up the draw ing-room of his daughter, would have unde stood why he was so well satisfied by th manner in which its master received hin though he advanced only one step from th hearthrug to perform the ceremony of shakin hands.

How widely different were his feelings the from what they had been when the ill-behave young man sat down in the middle of t grace? But the feelings, it must be reme bered, were not more different than the c cumstances. The young man *then* was still the possession of his dangerous liberty; n he was caught, and whether tame or not, mattered little, for it was perfectly evid that he could not fly away.

Though by no means from the same reaso or at any rate not from the same feeling Mrs. Selcroft was as greatly delighted as h husband. She had been quite aware of h

pretty Louisa's vehement love for the young man of the mountain, almost from the first moment she had beheld him, and knowing also that the fair girl was in delicate health, was it not natural that she should rejoice at seeing her, as she saw her now? Nothing certainly could be more natural.

Mr. Selcroft himself had never thought Henry a particularly conversable young man, and therefore he felt neither displeasure nor surprise at the very little he seemed to have to say now. Nor, in fact, did he care one single farthing about it. If in addition to the pleasure of seeing his daughter splendidly married, he should himself contrive to gain another step on the clerical ladder in consequence of it, he was already fully aware that it would be to his own skilful efforts, and to his own great ability, that he must owe it. All that Lucy had said to him concerning the celebrated Bishop of D—— he had treasured in his heart, and as he sipped his wine after dinner, he was scarcely conscious of the sort of languid silence into which his son-in-law had fallen, so deeply occupied was he in medi-

tating on the traits of episcopal character which he had been listening from Lucy, and in studying the important question as to how they might be met, managed, and turned to account.

It was by a sort of natural logic, I suppose, less profound perhaps, but quite as satisfactory as that of the immortal Dean of Drumcondra, that Mr. Selcroft came at last to the conclusion which decided his future conduct to the Bishop of *D*——.

Greatly rejoiced did he feel at the conviction he had reached before they joined the ladies in the drawing-room, namely, that with such a man as Lucy had described to him deeply addicted to forms, wrapped round in ceremonials, and clinging to all outward symbols of authority as fondly as his own ci-devant notion did to heavenly grace and election, the best, the easiest, and perhaps the only way to propitiate him would be by out-Heroding Herod in his own vehemence in defence of the efficacy of ceremonial splendour, and all the saving qualities derived from apostolic succession.

"And will not this seem easy?" was the question the well-fed Mr. Selcroft asked himself. "Will not this be as delightful as lounging in a soft arm-chair, after sitting bolt upright on a hard and narrow bench?" and he positively chuckled at his own clever simile, as he imbibed his exquisite coffee; nor had he ceased to enjoy the pleasant thoughts suggested by this change of scenery and decoration round him, when the delicious *chasse café* followed to cheer him still more by its influence.

Mrs. Selcroft, who generally understood her husband very well, was however now completely thrown out. "What could it possibly be that had put him in such spirits?" That she herself contemplated her beautiful Louisa, and everything that surrounded her, with great satisfaction, is quite certain, but nevertheless, she by no means felt as if she should like to stand up and dance; but really there was something in the manner of her husband which strongly suggested the idea that he would like it, if such a gambol could be achieved conveniently.

It was not alone the agreeable nature of Lucy's communication, however, which had thus elevated the spirits of the prosperous rector; his heart was cheered to its very core as he remembered also, how much the situation in which he now actually found himself as father to the mistress of such a house as that in which he had now taken up his abode was likely to assist the impression which he hoped to make on the Bishop of D——.

He had, indeed, a general idea that all bishops liked comforts; but he had very often been answered, that high-church bishops like splendour; and if he had never been aware of it before, he was fully awake to the conviction now, that there was less danger to the moral character in selecting, as dignitaries of the church, men already accustomed to fine linen and to faring sumptuously every day, than others who had all their lives been familiar only with the reverse.

In short, though the assertion may seem to be a bold one, it is highly probable that no man ever felt himself more perfectly fitted to be a dean, than Mr. Selcroft did at that moment.

Though this happy reunion of the truly affectionate Selcroft family produced a vast deal of very vivid enjoyment to every individual of it, their happiness was of a kind that does not admit of any great variety in its description, and all further details on the subject, may therefore be fairly left to the reader's imagination.

A few words, however, may be necessary to convey a just idea of the addition to this happiness, which resulted from their being brought into something like an intimate intercourse with the neighbouring families. The great dinner party for the Wednesday following their arrival, of which Lucy had given notice to her father as likely to introduce him to the important Bishop of D——, was the period from which this intercourse may be dated. The party was on the whole a very agreeable one to the Selcroft family, for the obvious reason, that every body wished to be civil to the family of the beautiful bride, who had been fortunate enough to have become mistress of Harley Court.

But country neighbours have been too often

and too well painted to make it desirable that any elaborate description should be given of the party which were assembled there on that particular day. The greatest man of the party is the only one concerning whom we have at present leisure to speak. This great man was very decidedly the Bishop of D——.

There were several persons present of much greater hereditary distinction, but the Bishop of D—— had achieved greatness, and greatness so obtained is, generally speaking, more worth gazing upon than any other. Nor could any discerning person, on making the acquaintance of the Bishop of D——, wonder that he should have achieved greatness.

But admiration and wonder are not always the same. To the poetical portion of mankind and womankind, who indulge in mentally contemplating the *beau-ideal*, the meeting with the Bishop of D—— must have been a great treat, for he must at once have fulfilled their *beau-ideal* of a bishop. And what was better still, the more they saw of him, and the more they knew of him, the more completely must their idea have been fulfilled.

t is infinitely more respectful to say this, . nothing more, than for so idle a pen as ıe to attempt to make a highly finished and ırate resemblance of any individual holding h a position, and being, moreover, so admir- y fitted for it. The chroniclers of the ls and ends of society have no business h such matters.

All I can presume to do is to describe the duct of the Reverend Mr. Selcroft under novel circumstances in which he found ıself placed.

I should like very much to have a sketch Quiz or Phiz, of the attitude and aspect of Selcroft at the moment of his presentation this every way great man. He himself ended that it should express, in the glance d the attitude of a moment, all the admi- ion, all the reverence, all the latent affection ich it was possible for one human being to l for another. With all his tact, with all real talent in the make-believe line, it was olutely a grimace. Had Lucy seen it, she ıld have been a good deal distressed; but

the proud and happy sister-in-law of Henry Harley escaped this mortification, and heartily enjoyed the display of the fine house and the fine people before the eyes of her delighted father.

On the whole, indeed, she was extremely fortunate, for everything went so smoothly from the mere effect of long-established routine, that neither the silly timidity of Louisa, nor the more dangerous pomposity of her father, made them sufficiently prominent to attract any particular attention; moreover, in both cases there was something to atone for the *petit ridicule;* for Louisa was very lovely, and the father decidedly possessed the exterior of a gentleman, and both one and the other are admirable in the way of shield, causing the shafts of ridicule to slip aside more effectually than many more intrinsically strong defences can do.

Only twice during the course of this gratifying display of Louisa's greatness before the eyes of her parents, only twice did anything occur sufficiently striking to awaken the sharp

irst of these occurred during the
: table-talk which followed the cessa-
changing courses and plates, during
uch to the filial gratification of Lucy,
:r and the Bishop of D—— were the
interlocutors. The bishop having,
air of polite interest in the question,
mself acquainted with the name of
roft's preferment and residence, said
and by no means as if he intended a
n on the subject: "The Bishop of
s the patron, I believe?"

my lord, he is," replied Mr. Selcroft,
iovement that was very like shrugging
ders; and, after a moment's silence,
d, very gravely—Lucy would have
solemnly—"Elmland is a parish of

the ministry of the late incumbent, who really, by what I hear, seems to have imagined that everything like sacred solemnity had been banished from our church services at the Reformation, by Act of Parliament. I trust that my new flock will support me in my endeavours to amend this. I say *amend*, my lord," he added, with a smile, "instead of *reform*, because, to say the truth, I never pronounce that word, if I can help it. . . . We have been over-reformed, my lord, in my humble opinion, most lamentably over-reformed."

A slight expression of surprise rested on the benign features of the bishop for half a moment, but his only reply was an almost imperceptible bow.

Lucy looked earnestly down into her plate, as if curiously examining the structure of her dessert-fork, and nothing at all like a smile was visible, though her first feelings, on hearing these novel words, might have led to it, if unrestrained. But her next feeling had more of fright than of fun in it, and she would have been right glad could she have whispered in

her father's ear, "Not too fast, dear papa! Not too fast, or you will stumble!"

The next occurrence which very nearly moved her to mirth, in spite of the important matters connected with it, happened later in the evening, and in the drawing-room, in consequence of Mr. Harley's ordering a card-table to be set out.

By an habitual movement of long standing, Mr. Selcroft half-closed his eyes as the abomination appeared, and moved away.

But ere he had taken three steps he suddenly recollected the having been told that all the cardinals played whist, whereupon, with a movement still more sudden than that of his retreat, he returned to the card-table, and had the bad courage actually to take up a pack of cards, and to begin handling them, as he remembered to have seen done by players in the days of his youth, before he threw himself into the patronizing arms of his old school-fellow, the Bishop of M——.

And this time, escape being easy, the laughing Lucy yielded to the temptation, and actually retreated to the hall that she might,

for one moment, enjoy unrestrained a l
laugh at her dear papa.

When she returned, she actually found
sitting at the card-table.

"I wonder if it will answer?" whis
the speculating girl to herself. "I won
a deanery was ever won by a rubber?"

CHAPTER XII.

HENRY HARLEY certainly disliked his father-in-law very heartily, and yet his residence for a fortnight in his house seemed to annoy him very little. Louisa saw no change in him, "he was still," she declared, "the most dear, darling, indulgent husband in the world;" and not even the far keener-sighted Lucy could perceive that the even tenor of his very quiet life was in any degree changed or interrupted by the presence of his guests.

And Lucy was quite right; it did make no change. The colouring of his existence was sober in tint, and it was deep in grain, and it would have required something much more

active in its influence than the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Selcroft, to have produced any perceptible change in it. Nevertheless, it was probably not entirely without something a little approaching to a sensation of pleasure that he heard Mr. Selcroft proclaim the necessity of his return to Elmland in time to preach in his own pulpit on the following Sunday.

To a certain degree of dissimulation the once fresh-hearted Henry Harley had certainly arrived, for he had taught himself to be uniformly observant and kind to his silly wife; but it seemed as if he had no power to go further, for the word "indeed?" pronounced interrogatively, was all he attempted in the way of inviting the party to prolong their stay.

But when they mentioned their intention of taking Lucy with them as part and parcel of their scheme of returning home, the case was different. For not only did he like Lucy as a companion much better than any other individual of the family, but he liked her better still as the companion of his wife, and he therefore immediately said, with more anima-

tion than he often said anything, "I hope you are not in earnest in talking of Lucy's going with you. I hope, Mrs. Selcroft, you will have the kindness to let her still continue with her sister."

"It is very kind of you to wish it, Mr. Harley," replied the mother, evidently well pleased by the prolonged invitation; "and much as I know her father must miss her society at home, I hope that he will make no difficulty about her accepting it."

"That must depend, my dear Mrs. Selcroft, upon the length of time she may wish to stay, or that her kind brother and sister may wish to have her," said Mr. Selcroft.

"We will talk that over before we go," returned his wife, with rather less of absolute obedience than she usually displayed upon receiving a command from her husband; but he was much too gentlemanlike a personage to make observation on this before company.

This conversation took place on Wednesday, and the following Friday was the day fixed for the departure of the Rector of Elmland and his lady.

About half-an-hour before the time, most punctually kept, for the luncheon, a very gentle tap was heard at the door of the library where Mr. Harley was sitting alone."

"Come in," said he, and Mrs. Selcroft entered.

He rose, and offered her a chair with an air of very assiduous politeness.

"Can you afford me five minutes' conversation?" said she.

"Indeed I can afford you any length of time you will be kind enough to employ visiting me," he replied.

"I will not abuse your indulgence, my dear Mr. Harley," she rejoined, placing herself in the chair he had presented to her; "but before I leave your house I wish to say a few words to you, and as we mean to start at an early hour to-morrow, we may not have time later."

Half alarmed by this exordium, Henry prepared himself to listen, very completely at a loss to guess on what subject his respected mother-in-law could possibly wish for a tête-à-tête with him. But the mystery was soon solved

for as discreetly and succinctly as possible, she gave him to understand that he was likely in due time to become a father.

This intelligence overcame the steadfast and constant composure of manner which was become habitual to Henry, much more than Mrs. Selcroft had anticipated. For a moment he was profoundly silent, but when he raised his eyes to hers, they were full of tears.

"I thank you very sincerely, my dear Mrs. Selcroft, for giving me this information," he replied, "and surely it must be unnecessary that I should tell you it gives me pleasure? Now, indeed, I hope you will not permit Lucy to leave her sister; and I hope, also, dear Mrs. Selcroft, that as the time approaches when your presence will be the most particularly important to your dear Louisa, you will yourself return hither."

Good Mrs. Selcroft, greatly touched and delighted by the manner in which her news had been received, answered his invitation by a cordial and affectionate assurance that the happiness of being near her darling Louisa at such a moment, would be doubled by believing

that he thought it was in her power to be useful.

The parting between the tender-hearted Louisa and her parents, was nevertheless very tearful and pathetic; and it was not till her mother had many times reiterated her promise of coming to her at a moment's warning, in case she felt *poorly and longed for her*, that she was permitted to tear herself away and get into the carriage that was to convey her home.

Never had the unfortunate Henry Harley permitted his weariness or his melancholy to be perceptible to his wife, either in the tones of his voice, or the expression of his features; great and constant watchfulness over himself had sufficed to prevent his hazarding the happiness of the perfectly blameless Louisa, by suffering her to perceive how thoroughly miserable he was himself. So much was in his power, and so much he achieved, but it was not in his power to appear gay and animated when his very heart felt dead within him; neither could he prevent his eyes looking heavy and his visage pale; and though Louisa,

uckily, did not reason very deeply, she had on the whole a sort of disagreeable consciousness that husbands were not so agreeable as overs.

But now, though poor Henry was neither ay nor ruddy, he was infinitely tender and ttentive to his fanciful young wife, and was as atchfully indulgent to her caprices as he ould have been if he had been still fortunate nough to think her the most captivating oman in the world.

Perhaps no man ever heard the happy idings of approaching paternity with a more eep and thankful sense of satisfaction than he ad done. The wretched, miserable feeling at he had cut himself off from all the interest, as well as all the happiness that life an give, had corroded his health and energy, oth of mind and body. He felt that he was blighted, hopeless, useless being, incapable of eing happy himself, or of giving happiness to thers, and the profound melancholy which as the inevitable result of this, was daily rowing upon him.

But the communication made to him by

Mrs. Selcroft, had done much towards making him feel that he had some interest left in life. One of the many painful thoughts which tormented him, arose from the conviction that his unhappy marriage would have the effect of separating him from his dearly loved orphan sister, whose partial attachment to himself had once been the source of as much pride as happiness to him. But now he thought of her high-toned character and her brilliant faculties, with feelings that made him positively blush at the idea of bringing her acquainted with the sister he had given her.

At this moment, however, it seemed as if a new feature were opening before them both. "My child," thought he, "may be to her as dear as I have been, and it is not likely that any human being will have to mourn twice in one life over such a disappointment as I have given her!"

The more he dwelt upon this idea, the dearer it became to him, till at length his solitary, early walks through his own beautiful woods once more became a pleasure to him, for hope again was with him.

Not indeed such hope, so bright, so beau-

tiful, as that which his silly fancy had strangled in his over eagerness to snatch it, on the Lake of Killarney; but still it was hope, that heaven-born, heaven-sent companion, without which life is only a moving, breathing death.

Women have been said to resemble spiders, not only in weaving delicate webs wherewith to catch the unwary insects who flutter round them, but also from having eyes which enable them to see in sundry directions at once.

As nature does nothing without good cause, we may be very sure that this circumobservant power is not given them for nothing. Lucy Selcroft was really altogether a very good girl, and indeed a much better girl, considering her birth, parentage, and education, than might reasonably have been expected; nor would it be fair to quarrel with her because she was sharp-sighted enough to perceive that, although a husband might not be exactly the same sort of thing as a lover, yet that it had been kindly arranged by Providence that he might be quite as easily managed, at least by a wife in the interesting situation of her sister.

This discovery would have been less pre-

cious and agreeable, had not our acute Lucy discovered also that though very polite and gentlemanlike, and all that sort of thing, her brother-in-law was but a moody sort of man after all, and might, very probably, have turned into a stiff-necked, hard-to-manage sort of a husband, had it not been for his exceeding delight in knowing that he was about to become a papa.

Now, if instead of being a good girl, Lucy had happened to be a good-for-nothing one she would indisputably have turned her wits to the discovery of ways and means by which she might amuse, or in some way benefit herself by taking advantage of the soft obedience with which Mr. Harley seemed inclined to listen to every hint of a wish expressed by his sister.

But instead of this, she only set all her wits to work to discover the best and easiest way of getting dear papa and mamma back again. Nor was she long ere she discovered a method of obtaining what she wanted in a manner so perfectly satisfactory and assured, that she could scarcely fail of becom

ing persuaded that it was the easiest and the best.

Having first ascertained, as in duty bound, that Louisa really did think that she should like to have papa and mamma back again, Lucy sought and obtained a tête-à-tête interview with her brother-in-law in his library, and having assumed a very solemn face, and shut the door, she held out her hand to him with a great deal of very genuine sisterly affection, and said, "My dear Mr. Harley, I am sure I don't wish to frighten you, very far from it, but it would not be right to conceal from you that poor dear Louisa is very far from well."

"Let us instantly send for Dr. Whatley, my dear Lucy," he replied, in a voice of very genuine alarm.

"Yes," she said, "I certainly think it would be very right to do so. But still I think I know what would do her more good than anything Dr. Whatley could send. She is pining, positively pining for papa and mamma, Mr. Harley. Of course I don't understand much about it, you know, how should I? But still

I am quite sure that I have heard people say that, in a case of this sort, it is very common indeed for a young married woman to pine after her mother, and I know that it is said that it is a very dangerous thing to contradict her."

"Then write to your mother, instantly, dear Lucy!" he replied. "Tell her that we shall all of us be expecting her in the shortest possible time after her receiving your letter. . . . . But, perhaps you had better send for Dr. Whatley, too."

"Yes; perhaps I had. We are all of us so very ignorant, Mr. Harley! But, do you know, I almost doubt if dear mamma will like to come unless poor dear papa is asked too," said Lucy.

Mr. Harley coloured slightly. He certainly was not very partial to the society of his father-in-law; but this trifling objection was got over in a moment, and he replied, in a voice that was, perhaps, more than usually gentle, "Then invite him also, Lucy. I leave the doing so or not entirely to you. All I wish to impress upon you is, that your sister's

health and comfort is much more important than any other consideration, and that I wish you to omit nothing that may contribute to it."

And so Mr. Selcroft, also, was earnestly entreated to return to Harley Court with the least possible delay, an injunction which he obeyed very literally, and apparently very greatly to his own satisfaction.

But Mr. Selcroft was too sensible and reflective a man not to be aware that there is, and that there ought to be, a great difference in the way in which a gentleman takes possession of his apartments, and his place at the dinner and breakfast tables, and his corner in the carriage, when he is invited as a matter of pleasure to himself, and compliment on the part of the inviter, and when, as in the present case, he is entreated to come solely for the pleasure and advantage of the inviter. Accordingly it was soon perceptible to the servants, if to no one else, that Mr. Selcroft considered himself much more at home now than he had done at his former visit. He told the housemaid, who kept his room in

order, that he must trouble her to get a sofa moved into it, and, also, that he could not contrive to manage for any length of time without a set of book-shelves and a writing-table in his dressing-room. He liked, too, the having something at night that had rather more old-fashioned comfort in it than the sherry and biscuits of the drawing-room, and this something speedily grew into a hot supper, which, to say the truth, was, in his secret heart, the favourite meal of the day; but not choosing to differ openly from the usages of the fashionable world in this respect, he managed, by Lucy's help, constantly to get the day's paper and some new review into his room every night, and, this arrangement made, he never failed to confess every evening, as soon as tea was over, that he was growing old very fast, and that nothing suited him so well as early hours.

To all these little comfortable arrangements for "dear darling papa," Louisa was made privy, but, of course, upon condition that she never said a word about it to dear Mr. Harley, who, kind as he was, could not be expected to

much about poor papa's little comforts
did.

e it not that there was a little feminine
e in this secrecy, and a little self-
ory feeling that they were excessively
f each other, and, in fact, one of the
ffectionate families in the world, all this
tion would have been a great loss of
t and ingenuity, for had the Rector of
ıd and Barton taken his breakfast,
on, dinner, tea, and supper all within
elter of his own dressing-room, it would
een a great relief to poor Harley; for
ng graces were intermitted, and very
if any, allusion made to the beauty of
s, as set forth by election and grace,
the soul-endangering idolatry of having
s visible within the walls of a church,
ill his father-in-law had not become an
ble companion in his estimation.

so completely was the health and well-
of his wife his first object at this time,
scarcely any annoyance could have
red to him a matter of sufficient import-
to be removed, if the doing so could

have risked her tranquillity for a momen
The idea that he might have a child that h
could love, that his sister could love, th
Lady Frances might care for and cherish,
she had cared for and cherished him, seeme
to inspire him with new life, and with
courage that could endure anything.

And that he had something to endu
during the anxious months which followed, i
very certain. His silly wife grew both fo
and fretful, so that even his dear solitary
walks were often curtailed, lest Mrs. Selcroft
should meet him at his return with the *dis*-
tressing intelligence that Louisa was looking
very pale, and seemed to long for him to come
and sit by her,—or that Lucy might be seen
standing waiting outside the door for his
return, and ready to rush in to her sister the
very instant she caught sight of him, in order
to shorten by her welcome news the lingering
pains of absence.

CHAPTER XIII.

HENRY HARLEY endured all these minor miseries with the most gentle and unwearying patience. The very consciousness, indeed, that they were miseries, produced a feeling of self-condemnation which could only be lulled by the most unresisting devotion of himself to all the silly caprices of his wife. The time all this lasted seemed very long, but, like all things else, it came to an end at last, and he was made joyful by the intelligence that he was the father of the most beautiful boy that ever the sun shone upon.

And really and truly he was very joyful. He had never dared to fix his hopes upon

having a son, though, undoubtedly, it was his most ardent wish; the birth of a child of either sex could not fail of being a relief to the desperately uninteresting tenor of his existence, but the hearing that he was the father of a hopeful boy seemed for a while almost to make him forget that he was unhappy.

And very great, too, was the pleasure of communicating this news to his sister and Lady Frances. He felt, poor young man, that the birth of this dear child would form a new tie between himself and Fanny, which might, in some sort, have the effect of counteracting the painful influence produced by his union with a woman and with a family with whom it was utterly impossible that either his aunt or his sister could associate with any genuine feelings of affection.

But scarcely had the hurry and agitation occasioned by this important event subsided into something like tranquillity, when another event occurred of so dismal and fatal a character as effectually to convert their joy into mourning.

The beautiful young mother, who had passed through her short period of suffering most particularly well, was attacked by fever, within a very short interval after it was over, which terminated in her death with a suddenness that seemed to render the event almost as incredible as it was terrible.

Henry himself felt the shock so deeply as almost to be overwhelmed by it; many hours passed over him after it was announced, during which he seemed to fancy himself the cause of all the misery that had fallen upon the unhappy family, who rushed to his presence to bewail the cruel loss they had sustained. But it is vain to dwell upon such scenes. The feelings they excite can only be painful, nor can any new moral light be elicited by dwelling upon them. Everything that followed was as nearly as possible everything that might be expected under the circumstances. Mrs. Selcroft and Lucy sobbed out their assurances that henceforth the first object of their lives would be the assisting the bereaved father in the tender and anxious charge of rearing his precious infant; while Mr. Sel-

croft declared, that he was now for the first time fully conscious of the blessing which his affluent income brought him, inasmuch as it removed every possible obstacle to their remaining at Harley Court; the expense of curates, even with very handsome stipends, at both his livings, being nothing in his eyes compared to the paramount duty of their all remaining there for the holy, the sacred, the all-important object of assisting to render the motherless infant worthy of the angel mother who bore him!

When Mrs. Selcroft and Lucy, with the truest love, the deepest grief, and the most genuinely tender and womanly belief in the probable usefulness, when they, poor pale-faced sobbing souls, gave utterance to their intentions and expectations of having the charge of the infant heir consigned to them, or rather when they frankly offered to consign themselves for evermore to Harley Court for the purpose of watching over him, Henry was conscious of no feeling save sympathy in their grief, and gratitude for their devotion; and he was consequently, at that moment, in consi-

d activity of purpose; and that to a
which might interfere with his own
ı, both of judgment and will, for ever

danger arose from the truth of their
n, and his belief in it. But the case
dely different when the smooth-lipped
of Elmland and Barton dilated upon all
le sacrifices he was ready to make to
the prosperity, both temporal and
, of the heir of Harley Court.
different effect might, indeed, be con-
by my readers as an instance of what
d poetical justice. It was Mr. Sel-
machinations and contrivances which
tangled the actions, and blighted the
es of Henry Harley, and it was an

And well was it for poor Harley that the offers and professions of Mr. Selcroft had sufficiently outstepped the modesty of nature to awaken him to the necessity of taking some little care of his freedom.

The idea of having Mr. Selcroft perpetuall at Harley Court, did him in fact a world good. It would have been difficult, perhaps for any one living to have hit upon an scheme so calculated to restore him to healthy and active state of mind, and he once resolved that with all the gentle and considerate kindness that it was possible show to Mrs. Selcroft and Lucy, he would st contrive to find some means of keeping t plotting rector at a proper distance.

His first attempt towards this was by sayi very quietly, but very distinctly also, "You're very kind, sir, in your wish to be useful to m But, at my age, I should consider my sinki into such helpless indolence as to render necessary for any friend to neglect his o affairs in order to take charge of mine, absolutely sinful."

Mr. Selcroft did not look discomfited, l

it is probable he felt so, for he left the library without making any further allusion to any additional curates.

But though this very wholesome spirit of resistance had been roused within him at the idea of never again losing sight of his reverend father-in-law, Henry Harley again became as much as a little child when his thoughts turned upon the care and nurture of the little treasure which his poor Louisa had left him. He thought he might be able to manage his own house as well as Mr. Selcroft could manage it for him, but he did not think that he could superintend the nursery department so well as Mrs. Selcroft and Lucy.

This was decidedly the weak point of his position, and when he thought of this, he became an absolute coward, and would thankfully have listened to the dictation of any woman in the world who could only make him believe that she knew a good deal about babies in general, and considered his little Henry Louis as the most precious babe, that "since the birth of Cain the first male child,

to him that did but yesterday suspire," h
ever been permitted to visit the Earth.

After a vast deal of meditation, hower
both by night and by day, it occurred to h
that if both his aunt, Lady Frances, and
ever dear sister, Fanny, could be preva
upon to give up the delights of Paris for
short remainder of the spring season, and c
sent to take up their abode with him and
little boy during the first anxious year of
darling's life, he might at the end of that t
again accompany them abroad, if they w
to continue their continental wande
taking his little Henry with him.

No sooner had this idea taken posses
his mind than every other scheme becam
tasteful to him, but so delightful did th
possible mode of escape from all his d
difficulties appear, that the heavy op
on his spirits became at once most
lously light, and if Mr. Selcroft him
just then proposed to resign his cle
ferment, and break up his own esta
entirely, in order more conveniently

take the superintendence of that of his son-in-law, Henry Harley would have listened to it with the most exemplary philosophy, and would probably have uttered nothing more nearly approaching a negative, than a gentle recommendation that the execution of this friendly project should be delayed till all the parties concerned in it should have had time to meditate upon it a little more at leisure.

In short, upon the whole, the Selcroft incubus which at one time appeared threatening to overwhelm him, eventually proved to be an especial blessing, both from the energy which it had inspired in the making him look about for means of escape, and from the delightful feeling of relief which followed upon the adoption of the plan which had suggested itself for that purpose.

It was with a sensation that almost seemed like the dawn of a new and happy existence that he sat down to write both to his aunt and sister. He had already received letters from them both, in reply to his melancholy announcement of the death of his young wife,

and in his present letter therefore he was called upon to dwell upon that sad event; he did dwell upon was the welfare of precious boy.

"I know you would both of you love h he wrote; "nay, till you shall confess to Fanny, that you have at last followed advice and condescended to think about ma ing, like other young ladies, you will fir difficult to persuade me that you do not more interest about my little Harry, about all the fine people, and all the things contained in 'Paris, cette belle vil

He did not however enter upon the s of the Selcroft annoyances, partly beca loved to believe that they would not the additional motive which this mig in order to induce them to accept l tation, and partly because he th extremely likely that they might betrayed something like a blameable in confessing that he wanted any ass order to enable him to retain the master of his own house.

How far he might have been r

onjecture it is not necessary to inquire, ıuch as he was perfectly correct as to the

Balls, operas, plays, and dinner parties all abandoned, and Lady Frances Monk- ınd Fanny Harley once more found them- ı reunited to the nearest relative and ɜst friend they had in the world.

CHAPTER XIV.

It was not without a good deal of manœuvring, and a good deal of difficulty too, in spite of all the cleverness and circumspection with which it was carried on, that Henry contrived to get all the three Selcrofts off the premises at the time that he expected his aunt and sister to arrive at Harley Court. He did indeed manage it, at last, but on the express condition, however, that the grandmamma might be permitted to investigate the state of the nursery, and "see with her own eyes" that all was right, before the end of the week following.

"I do assure you, my dear Mr. Harley,"

she said, and she spoke truly, as she always did when she dared to do it; "I do assure you that no motive less important than the health, and perhaps the life of this darling child, should induce me thus to obtrude myself on her ladyship and Miss Harley. But I know so well how profoundly ignorant single ladies are concerning babies, and everything belonging to them, that I should think myself too guilty to live, if I permitted any feeling of ceremony to prevent my doing my duty to my poor Louisa's child."

To this solemn appeal the young father gave the only reply that it was possible he should give. He assured her that after a few quiet days given without interruption to his aunt and his sister, he should be very glad to see her, if she would come down to take a peep at their little treasure.

"I know," he added, with what he thought to be the perfection of diplomatic discretion, "I know that whether we like it or not, we shall be obliged to go out a great deal, as all our neighbours will want to see Lady Frances and my sister; and as a great deal of our

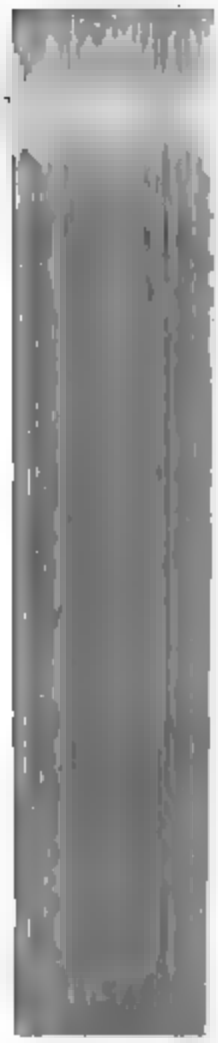
visiting is so distant as to render it [illegible] for us to sleep out, I will [illegible] that you should pay me a long visit at this time."

"Nor shall I wish it either, dear Henry!" she replied. "I can easily believe that you and your aunt and sister, must have much to say to each other. Let me but see my [illegible] Louisa's boy often enough to know that [illegible] single ladies' nursing shall lead to any [illegible] mischief, and I shall have no inclination to intrude farther."

Henry felt that good Mrs. Selcroft was not very well pleased by his manner of accepting her offered visitation, and he felt, too, that he had not any great reason to be surprised at this. Nevertheless his courage did not fail him. He knew that his aunt and sister were giving up a great deal that was very agreeable for his sake; and he could not endure the idea of rendering their kindness abortive by encouraging the approach of the very evil from which he hoped their presence would protect him. And this little scene over, the Selcroft trio actually departed, leaving the emancipated

n a state more nearly approaching
s than he had ever hoped to enjoy

punctual was the arrival of the tra-
and despite the hatchment over the
would be false to deny that the re-
elatives experienced great pleasure at
eting. That it was not unmixed plea-
uite certain, for the thoughts, both of
nd Henry, reverted, in spite of their
vishes to prevent it, to the last happy
they then thought, hopeful weeks
.ey had passed together at Rome, and
ry blight that had blasted all these
uld not be forgotten by either.
perfect joy too was naturally, and
perly, checked by the melancholy fate
eautiful young creature who had paid
life the honour of giving an heir to
Court, and not to feel the over-shadow-
m of an event so recent and so sad
ossible.
; was equally so that they should not
e, but more especially the deeply-
brother and sister, feel also a most



ing as to himself; and again there
another pleasure, namely, that of ag
ing the friends and neighbours of h
and of his own happy youth, much
he had been wont to meet them, l
knew what sorrow was, than when su
by the new scenery, decorations, and
personæ with which he had lately
them.

In short, he very soon began to fee
in such amended spirits, and so well
to forget the sorrows which had pa
him, that, foreign as everything like l
was to his nature, he positively tried
the flow of happy gaiety which seem
to overpower his discretion.

On their first arrival Ladv Fra

upon the elder lady inviting the younger one to dismiss her maid and indulge her in one of those dressing-room tête-à-tête gossipings, which ladies who love one another so greatly relish, the mock gravity with which Lady Frances began the confabulation, by saying, "Well, my dear, how do you think your brother is looking?" was replied to by Fanny, by something very like a laugh.

"What could he have said or done, before we went abroad together last year, which could have so entangled him as to compel him to make this marriage which has now been unmade in so melancholy a manner?" said Lady Frances.

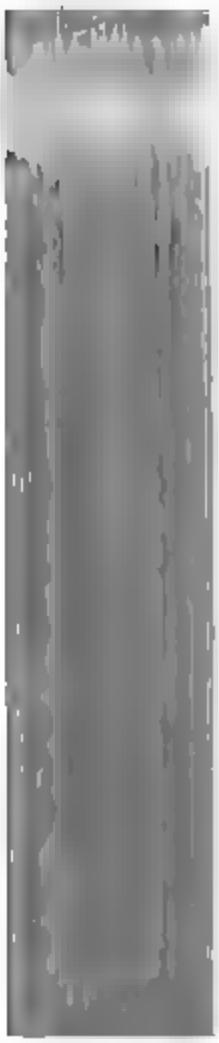
"Whatever it was, Aunt Frances," replied Fanny, "he thought his honour too much involved by it to permit his escaping from the tie; and with this conviction, which I am sure you feel as much as I do, we must perforce respect him; though when we see him as we see him now, and remember what he might have been, it is impossible not to feel a little angry at the folly which has so distorted, as I may say, his whole destiny."

fully resolute and persevering; and did I believe in this love as entirely as you seem to do, I should honour her for it infinitely. But even this, as it seems to me, could scarcely account for the cold forgetfulness of your sincere affection for her, which her manner of acting towards you has evinced. Was it necessary, think you, in order to guard her delicacy from the cruel feeling of having loved in vain, was it necessary, in order to achieve this, that she should have shrunk with such evident distaste from the idea of having you as her travelling companion? Was it necessary, in order to avoid the mortifying suspicion of wearing the willow, that she should gradually drop your correspondence—first, by heartless letters, short and far between, and finally, as a *coup de grace*, never answering your last letter at all? None of all this, dear Fanny, appears to me to have been, in any degree, necessary for the preservation of her delicacy—the said delicacy being in no danger of suspicion from any quarter. She may be thought, and in my humble opinion it is very possible she may be, both cold and capricious;

but she is certainly not of the order of females subject to fall prematurely in love."

"We read her differently, Aunt Frances," replied Fanny, with a sigh, "and it is very likely that we shall never know which reading is right and which wrong. But to return to our own dear Henry, he does, indeed, seem to be very rapidly progressing towards recovery from the state of profound sadness in which we found him, and let us be thankful for it. And as to the future, Aunt Frances, let us trust to Providence and the natural course of events, without plotting and planning any scheme whatever, either to accelerate or restrain their march. *You*, dear aunt, must not be made a prisoner, but I feel as if I had but one duty now, and that will keep me at dear Henry's side exactly as long as he wishes to have me with him."

"And if he wishes to have me too, Fanny, he shall be very welcome to have me," returned her aunt. "I have enjoyed our travels vastly, but not so much either as to have lost my relish for English head-quarters; and as long as Harley continues a widower, I certainly



produced, we surely must think so s
undoubtingly at present."

In this opinion, at least, they b
curred, and they mutually confessed
other before they exchanged their la
night," that, notwithstanding all th
ment they had derived from their tra
were heartily glad to find themsel
more quietly established at their wel
Harley Court, with the comfortable
that they were conferring an essentia
on its master by being there.

Poor ladies! They could scarcely
to be reckoning without their host, fo
host had been present with them
very heartily have confirmed the co
of their statement; but, neverthe

CHAPTER XV.

We must now change the scene to Elmland Rectory. The breakfast on the morning that followed the return of the Selcroft family to their comfortable residence was a very lingering one, for they all seemed to have a great deal to say to each other, both respecting their late visit and the proper time at which to make another.

"It is dreadful to think," said Mrs. Selcroft, "that we have actually been obliged to leave that precious, darling, little angel to the care of two gay, fine ladies, and both single women, too, who know no more about the management of a child than I do about the rearing a

every moment of the day and ni
who can answer for my orders being

"No one, my dear," replied her
"and you will be guilty of a ver
dereliction of duty if you trust to t
so. There is but one way, Mrs. S
which you can acquit yourself in t
heaven of the heavy responsibility
has pleased God to throw upon y
must, whether it be convenient or n
be yourself for ever near the preci
that our Louisa has left to us. Wh
careless boy of a father know
rearing of an infant? It is horribl
of all the perils to which that chi
this very moment be exposed, sole
you are eating your breakfast here

Much as I love my own nice house, I should be quite ready, at a minute's warning, to pack up everything and set off for Harley Court, there to remain till the darling boy was sent to Eton. But the doing this will not depend upon me, Mr. Selcroft," she added, with a look of very significant expression.

"I know that perfectly well, Mrs. Selcroft," he replied. "And be sure of this, my dear good lady, that you never make an observation of any kind in the least degree worth attending to, but you will find out that I have made it before. Our well-born, well-acred son-in-law, Mrs. Selcroft, is a great brute, utterly incapable of appreciating the value of the connexion he formed when he married our sainted Louisa! Of this, believe me, I am quite as fully aware as it is possible that you can be. But that will have nothing whatever to do in deciding the conduct of a man of such unswerving principle as myself. You have known me, Mrs. Selcroft, long enough to be aware of this, and, therefore, if you strictly did your duty, only one-half as strictly as I shall do mine, you would abstain from alluding

to anything that may make the straight path of duty which lies before me impossible, or even difficult, to tread."

"Indeed, indeed, Mr. Selcroft," replied the meek lady, while tears of penitence started to her eyes, "I should be very, very sorry to do it."

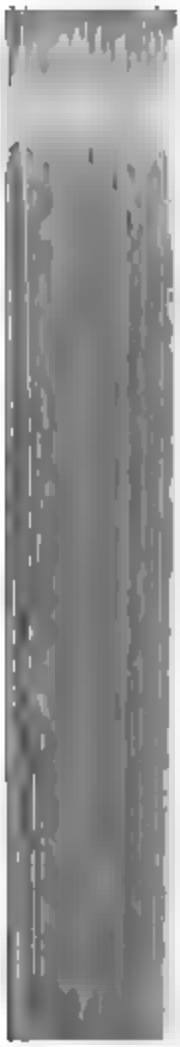
"Let me then hear no more hints, either by word or look, that you think the unnatural conduct of Mr. Harley of sufficient importance to be attended to. I hope, Lucy," he added, turning to his daughter, "I hope you have no such contemptible feelings?"

"I have no feelings at all towards Henry Harley, papa, but those of kindness and gratitude," replied Lucy, boldly.

"Unless you intend to make me feel that I am childless," replied her father, apparently with great emotion; "unless you mean to bring down my grey hairs in sorrow to the grave, let me never again hear you speak in such terms of a man whom I truly believe to be one of the most worthless and unprincipled individuals existing."

"Papa!" exclaimed Lucy, looking and feel-

st unfeignedly shocked. "What can
an?"
actly what I say, my poor deluded
he replied. "You have not studied
nan heart as I have done, my love, or
uld not look so greatly astonished at
old that some men may be very tole-
greeable, and yet utterly worthless."
t why did you let poor Louisa marry
cried Lucy, with a very well feigned
horror.
the saucy girl, when she said this,
in any hope or expectation of seeing
her look perplexed by her question?
did she was punished for her undutiful
t by her disappointment.
Selcroft only shook his benign-looking,
me head, and replied, in an accent of
ender affection, "Dear love!—I will try
rd against any similar blunder in your
se! Trust me, my Lucy, that should
re still more devotedly than your sweet
lid, you will love in vain! Never again
ıy authority so slumber as to permit the
ge of a child without absolutely knowing



should have found it out now, pa
Lucy, with a frown, that looked
rebellion. "I am sure," she added, '
have been a great deal better that '
have all gone down to our graves in
rather than have made a discovery v
end, I suppose, by separating us enti
Mr. Harley and from his dear boy."

Thought is rapid, and very rapid
thought which glanced, at that
through the brain of Mr. Selcroft,
possibility or impossibility of get
Harley, of Harley Court, to marry his
Lucy *en seconde noce.*

But with great and ever-ready
he felt that the probabilities were
him; and without wasting a secon

fidence in me! Were I a man to be led solely by my feelings, Lucy, I should, indeed, as you have just surmised, command both your mother and yourself to give me your solemn promises never to see him more. But duty, my child, speaks to my ear, whatever it may do to others, in a voice ten thousand times more imperative than any which can be uttered by feeling. My duty tells me that, far from turning away from this man, merely because my dislike of what is morally bad leads me to hate him, I must screw every nerve to the endurance not only of ordinary association with him, such as the nearness of our connexion might seem to render necessary, but of constantly being in his house. And I will do this, Lucy; and you and your poor mother must do it likewise; or how shall we ever hope to snatch the brand from the burning? How save all that is left us of our darling Louisa from the bottomless pit that is yawning for it?"

Lucy Selcroft had no objection whatever to the idea of passing a considerable portion of every year in the splendid mansion and aris-

tocratic neighbourhood of her brother-in-law, but she did not exactly approve the plan which now seemed to be proposed, of taking these blessings by storm, nor, to say truth, had she any faith in her papa's power of succeeding in the attempt.

Neither her education, nor perhaps her nature, made her capable of comprehending all that Henry Harley was, but she was sufficiently clear-sighted to see what he was not; and Mr. Selcroft himself had not more confidence in his own steadfast purpose of obtaining the object he had in view, nor even in the immeasurable elasticity of his own conscience as to the means he should think himself justified in using to insure it, than his daughter Lucy had in the sound judgment and quiet firmness of her brother-in-law to prevent it. She knew that he was neither silly nor timid, and she thought this must suffice to prevent his giving up the possession of his house or of his child either to the machinations of her scheming father.

There really was, as I have said before, a great deal of family affection among the

Selcrofts, and the feeling is an excellent feeling; but like every other generated in a human heart it is liable to weakness, fallacy, and error of many kinds. And in few cases could this be more likely to happen than in that of poor Lucy Selcroft. With a father who, though fond of her and all the rest of his belongings, was neither more nor less than a very contemptible, though rather clever, time-serving hypocrite, and a mother both amiable and intelligent indeed, but whose reverence for the doctrine of passive obedience in a wife led to sad moral confusion as to the nature of right and wrong.

The consequence of this to Lucy was that she had lived on to her present advanced age of twenty-two and a half in a wonderful state of ignorance as to the precise difference between what was expedient and what was right; a somewhat perilous state of mind for any one, but less so, perhaps, for a young person in Lucy's position than for most others, inasmuch as she was very rarely called upon to act for herself in any matters of real im-

But now she seemed suddenly roused to a consciousness that it was just possible that dear darling papa, and dear darling mamma too, might have such notions and enact such laws respecting the rights and privileges of the Selcroft family within the precincts of Harley Court, as she, Lucy, might deem it both right and expedient to correct. But this was not an easy business; for, with all her chartered freedom of speech, Lucy, like the rest of the family, had been so accustomed to consider her father's commands, when given in earnest, as in earnest indisputable, that the idea of making up her mind to disobey him on any important point, and that, too, in the most decided manner possible, was rather startling.

Nevertheless, she resolved at once that she would not take up an enforced residence in the house of her brother-in-law without giving him very clearly to understand that she herself disapproved the proceeding, and strongly advising him, moreover, to take very decided measures for putting an effectual stop to it.

But this resolution was much more easily ken than acted upon; long and painfully nough, poor girl, did she ponder on the best nner of counteracting the mischievous con-equences of her father's scheme, but the more he meditated upon the subject the more learly evident did it become that, if she took ny active measures to prevent the execution f them, it could only be done at the risk of reaking for ever the tie which, on the whole, ad been a very pleasant one between herself nd him. And then followed a very natural nterval of genuine filial feeling, and poor ucy wept heartily. And after this she robably felt both softened and weakened, r all her deliberations ended in her making p her mind to do nothing and to say nothing r the present, letting things take their ourse, and reserving all her power and all r skill till the moment should arrive when r disapproval of her father's plans might declared, with a better chance of being ful.

CHAPTER XVI.

ALTHOUGH there might have bee
mixture of weakness in the resolutic
taken by Lucy to let matters rest
moment, without taking any active n
to protect her greatly esteemed brothe
from the persecution with which
threatened, there was no vacillation
pose mixed with it.

There was a tough struggle, and a
one, at her heart before she finally yield
self to the conviction that, upon this o
it would be right, and not wrong, to
vent dear, darling papa in his project o
lishing a sort of permanent right to tl

pation of the very pleasant apartments which had been assigned to them at Harley Court; but it was to this conclusion that she came at last.

It would have been a great comfort to her, could she have conversed freely with her mother on the subject; for not only did she know her to be a true woman and not a false one, but moreover, though she might not be fully aware of the fact herself, she loved her immeasurably more, and immeasurably better, than she did her father, notwithstanding the comparative coldness of her ordinary address to her "*Dear, darling papa!*" it being a formula carefully taught, and rigorously demanded by Mr. Selcroft himself from both his daughters, from the very moment that he had succeeded in

> "Chasing dumb silence from the ruby door,
> Where she had mutely sat two years, or more."

Whereas "*Mother!*" without any addition whatever, was Lucy's favourite style of address to Mrs. Selcroft. Louisa had never adopted this, declaring that she thought "*mamma*"

To her mother, however, Lucy
siderately, and very wisely, determine
nothing on the subject; not that she
doubt whatever as to what her moth
opinion on the subject would be, but
experience had made her quite aware
real opinion was a matter of no con
at all, inasmuch as it would not in
slightest degree influence her cond
most assuredly, let her think what sh
it was her husband's opinion, and not
that she would act upon.

"If I *am* driven to do someth
obedient," thought Lucy, "it will be l
any rate, to disobey one parent instea
by the act;" and with this sage
deeply impressed on her mind, Lucy
avoided all allusion to the subject

returned home, Mr. Selcroft received his large, comfortable-looking cup of well-creamed tea from the hand of his daughter, with a deep sigh, and in answer to the sympathizing and inquiring looks of both his companions, he sighed again, and then said, "You must not mind me, Mrs. Selcroft, nor you, dear Lucy, either; but the truth is, that I am dreadfully out of spirits, and I cannot help it,—I cannot get the better of it!"

"No wonder, my dear Mr. Selcroft! No wonder!" replied his wife, her own eyes filling with tears as she spoke; for she thought, poor woman, that he alluded to the loss of their beloved Louisa. "The only wonder," she added, "is that we can any of us ever forget it for a moment."

"If you are alluding to the death of my daughter Harley, you are mistaken, Mrs. Selcroft, and you are wrong, extremely wrong. You may have forgotten, but I have not, the manner in which David behaved under the same affliction. Whatever the weakness of my human nature may still occasion me to feel, you will no longer hear that feeling break

forth in sighs. The depression of spirits of which I now complain, is not occasioned by what is past and hopeless, but by such a state of things, at the present time, as I feel to be most deplorable, but which I also feel to be not hopeless, inasmuch as it depends wholly on my own energy, my own persevering energy in doing what is right, to remedy."

"Then I am quite sure it will be remedied," said Mrs. Selcroft, precisely in the accents in which such words are sure to be spoken by a thoroughly well-trained wife.

"Yes, my dear. I should be equally sorry and surprised if you could feel any doubt on that point. Yes, Mrs. Selcroft, I shall do exactly that which ought to be done upon this occasion, as well as upon every other in which I am concerned. It is not for the result, therefore, that I am anxious. There is, as we all know, an especial Providence which watches over the righteous, and those visibly set apart as the elected of heaven; and woe to those who doubt either its justice or its power. But though the thing that is right will of course always be done by men so favoured by

Providence as myself, it does not, therefore, follow that the doing it will be always agreeable; and it is this, my dear, that produces the human weakness of a sigh."

Had the cheerful-spirited Lucy not guessed, and with pretty strong assurance that she had made no blunder, that her father was alluding to the manœuvrings which he knew must precede his next inroad upon the independence of Harley Court, she would most assuredly have said something encouraging to keep up the spirits of this dear, darling papa; but as it was, she was as mute as a fish.

This silence was not pleasant to the high-fed rector. He knew of old that Lucy could be saucy, very saucy; but the merry spirit which led to this, was by no means likely to keep her silent. He looked at her steadily for a moment, and knit his brows. He suspected, and he was by no means pleased at it, that her womanly weakness, and her too great habit of thinking for herself, joined together, led her (not to blame him, that was quite impossible, but) to differ from him in opinion as

to the necessity of overcoming their gr
the loss of Louisa.

Had he guessed at the rebellion, 1
say blasphemy, which filled her soul a
moment, it is possible that he might
thought it highly advisable to put her
bodily restraint, and treat her as a l
But fortunately for the poor girl, noth
monstrous either entered his head or wa
to do so; but, after a moment's conside
he permitted himself to believe that th
girl really lamented his not continu
soothe her feelings by renewed express
his own sorrow; and in this persuasi
said, with mixed dignity and gentlene
am sorry for you, my dear child! So
the weakness of your sex and of your n
I should have hoped, my dear Lucy, tha
having been so much with me, might
enabled you to learn sufficient commar
your own feelings, to enable you to comp
mine, and in some degree, my poor cl
share them. That all human beings a
endowed with equal powers of intellect,

know, and while this knowledge should teach the weaker portion of the human race humility, it should teach pity, and not pride, to those who feel themselves gifted with higher faculties and a wider range of intelligence. Heaven forbid, my dear love, that I should ever forget in my own person the truly Christian duty of giving honour where honour is due. We do not make ourselves, Lucy, nor can any degree of conscious superiority ever justify us in forgetting that we are but clay. This is the task which Providence has thought fit to throw on me, and pray for me, my dear, good child, that I may perform it worthily."

As Mr. Selcroft concluded this speech, he held out his hand to Lucy, with a smile of such benignant gentleness, as caused her to withdraw her eyes from his face, and fix them on her tea-cup as she received it.

This touching little episode being over, Mr. Selcroft began to butter his toast, and eat his egg, very much as if nothing particular had happened, and he hoped, in this manner, to restore the spirits both of his wife and daughter, to the tone which the business-like theme

which he intended to enter upon, required.

"We are very nice and very comfortable here!" he exclaimed, looking round his not very large, but very well-appointed eating-room. "But the trumpet-note of duty sounds the painful note that must make us forsake it! Go we must, and with as little delay as possible, to Harley Court, and there we must remain too, however much we may wish to revisit our dear household gods at pretty Elmland."

"Do you mean that we are to live at Harley Court, papa?" said Lucy, colouring.

"Yes, my love," he replied, "I suppose you must call it living there, although of course it will be necessary for me to run up here, and to Barton also, from time to time. But it will be best and safest for the child that you should at once abandon the idea of having any other home. Should I indeed obtain a stall, and still more should I obtain a deanery, it will be necessary for you to keep the residence with me, especially at first. But all this I believe is always very easily managed

where any good reason can be given for desiring leave of absence. And later in the day, it is impossible to say what may happen. You, dear Lucy, we may of course expect to see well married, and our darling grandson ought, I think, at least for a year or two, to be sent to Eton."

Mrs. Selcroft, as usual, looked the model of gentle acquiescence as she listened, but it is probable, notwithstanding all her genuine love and devotion to her little grandson, that she would not, if left to her own discretion, have thought it necessary to make Harley Court her permanent residence. Of this, however, she gave no hint, being profoundly convinced that any opposition to her husband's will would be as vain as it would be sinful, and as sinful as it would be vain. So she eat her breakfast very tranquilly as she listened to him, now and then giving a little nod as he proceeded, which she well knew was the expression of acquiescence which he preferred to all others, because it did not interrupt him.

But with Lucy the case was different. Her father permitted a much greater license of

very evidently wished that she sh
When, therefore, she suddenly raise
and fixing them very steadily on hi
nounced the words, "Has Mr. Har
us all to come and live with him, p
neither looked surprised, nor angry
looked playful. And it was very
that he patted her cheek as he re
your little heart at rest about all t
What I think it right to do, I shal
find the means of doing, my dea
very frivolous brother-in-law's opin
subject be what it may."

And on hearing this, Lucy, to
course to a little nod, by way of
was not exactly the same sort of n
mother's; but whatever it might re
mattered little, for her father saw
having not thought it necessary to l

CHAPTER XVII.

LUCY civilly waited till the breakfast was over, and then she retired to her own very quiet and snug apartment, and shut the door.

"The time is come," murmured she, as with flushed cheeks and beating heart she sat down before her writing-table. "I know Henry Harley better than my father does. I know all his goodness, all his kindness, all his noble liberality of feeling and acting, on every occasion; but I know also that he is neither a fool, nor a coward, to be bullied into receiving any one as inmates, merely because they choose to propose themselves as such, and that, too, when

he has his own sister and aunt with him! And yet I know full well that it will cost him a pang to refuse the offer, absurd and unreasonable as it is, when made to him by the family of his lost Louisa. Dear Henry Harley! Can I ever forget the unceasing indulgence with which he treated every wish and every whim of our lost darling, and yet it was evident that his own character had none of the boyish softness which would have rendered such watchful tenderness a favourite occupation. We owe a thousand times more gratitude for it on that account, and for that reason, if for no other, I will give him the advantage of a timely hint before this terrible proposal is made to him."

All this if not uttered, was thought during the brief interval required by Lucy for the preparing her pen, ink, and paper, and then she sat down, and wrote as follows—not without a beating heart, and the consciousness that she was about to do what ought not to be done if she could possibly help it, but very honestly convinced that, under the circumstances, it was the best thing she could do.

MY DEAR MR. HARLEY,

"I feel sure that you will not misunderstand my motives in writing to you as I am about to do, and that even if you think me wrong in doing so, you will give me credit for wishing to be right. I need not tell you that the health and welfare of your dear little boy occupy our thoughts at present beyond all else in the world; and whenever this is the case upon any subject, I should think it very likely that judgment and common sense would stand a great chance of being overwhelmed by feeling. At any rate, it appears to me, that this is to be the case just now at Elmland Rectory, for my father has just declared it to be his opinion, that the only sure and certain means of your little boy's being properly taken care of, is the removal of his family from their own dwelling to yours. My respect for my father's judgment on most occasions is too great, as I am sure you are aware, to permit of my expressing any contrary opinions, and even on this occasion I should be sorry to confess to him how completely my view of the case differs from his own. Never-

theless, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact, that the scheme is one that it is quite impossible you should adopt, although your great and uniform kindness to us on all occasions leads me to think that you will not give the decided refusal which perforce you must give, without feeling that the doing so is disagreeable. And this it is which makes me trouble you by writing now, for I think it possible, that by knowing my father's scheme beforehand may enable you either to prevent the proposal altogether, by suggesting some plan of your own, or at any rate, may give you more time to reflect on the best manner of declining it. I shall not expect any answer to this letter; and it would be better that you should not write to me on the subject. In full assurance that your kindness will induce you to excuse my thus troubling you, even should you think my doing so unnecessary,

"I remain, my dear Mr. Harley,

"Your very affectionate sister,

"LUCY SELCROFT."

To do Lucy Selcroft justice, it is but fair

to say, that she had never yet, in the whole course of her life put a letter in the post with her own hands, because she wished to conceal the fact of sending the said letter a secret from her family; but she was fain to do so now, and greatly comforted was she when she found herself safe again in her own room, after having satisfactorily achieved her secret enterprise.

Her letter was certainly written with a most honest hope of being useful to Mr. Harley, and to her father also, by sparing both of them the pain and embarrassment of a fruitless, as well as a perilous correspondence; but her most sanguine hopes never suggested to her the possibility of her brother-in-law's receiving it with so warm a feeling of gratitude, as in fact it caused him.

He loved and admired her, for the strong feeling of disapprobation for her scheming father's unwarrantable plan, which her taking so strong a step betrayed, and he felt now for the first time, that his little boy had at least one maternal relation of whom he need not be ashamed.

The few first moments after the perusal of

the letter, were given wholly to gratitude and admiration for the writer; and then his thoughts endeavoured to fix themselves upon the important question of how best to profit by it.

But unfortunately the more he meditated, the more difficult it became. How could he decline a proposal of which it was absolutely necessary that he should appear to be totally ignorant? Yet, nevertheless, he was determined that Lucy's warning should not be received in vain, both because he felt all the value of a little time for the purpose of guarding himself against an invasion which he was fully determined to resist; and also, because he greatly desired to give his kind little sister-in-law the pleasure of knowing that the effort she had so courageously made, had not been in vain.

After wasting many minutes, however, in vain attempts to hit upon some perfectly unobjectionable way of giving Mr. Selcroft to understand that he could on no account be permitted to take up his abode at Hanley Court, he found that he did not advance one inch; and then he suddenly, and most happily

recollected that though he himself was exceedingly stupid, his aunt and sister were not, and therefore, that the very best thing he could do, would be to lay the whole business before them, and ask their counsel how he should proceed. No sooner had this idea occurred to him, than he felt it to be excellent in every way, for it would give him the opportunity of introducing to their notice in the most favourable manner, the only individual of his late wife's family who had the slightest chance of being approved by them.

But in order to put her, and her letter, in a proper light, it was absolutely necessary to expatiate a little upon the character of her father, and as he meditated upon this necessity, and felt that no reasons of delicacy any longer existed to prevent his doing so in the same tone of unrestrained confidence in which he had ever been accustomed to converse with them, a feeling of gladness gave elasticity to his step, as he approached the room they occupied, which he analyzed no farther than to tell himself that he was exceedingly glad they happened to be at Harley Court.

"You are both here! That is well, for I want you both," he said, as he entered with Lucy's letter open in his hand. "I have a letter here from a young lady whom I wish to introduce to you, and for whom I wish to bespeak your favour, for she is a great friend and favourite of mine. But before I read her letter to you I wish to give you a slight sketch of her birth, parentage, and education. The writer of this letter is Mr. Selcroft's eldest daughter, but no more like her father than I to Hercules. I dare say you have both of you guessed already, though we have never talked much about him, that I am not very partial to my father-in-law, and, therefore, in telling you that Lucy is unlike him, I, in some degree, lead you to understand why I like her. It really was not my intention to plague either of you with long-winded details and descriptions of Mr. Selcroft, but in order to comprehend this letter, and to give me your joint advice on the subject of it, I believe it will be absolutely necessary for me to talk to you about him a little more than I had intended to do. But I will be as

brief as I can, and, briefly, I think him, take him for all in all, one of the most detestable individuals with whom it has ever been my lot to make acquaintance."

"Which, after your preface, is as much as to say that you think his daughter Lucy one of the most delectable," said Lady Frances.

"I really think you may construe it so, my dear aunt, without much blundering. Among other charming traits of character, my reverend father-in-law has long ago contrived to make it very evident to me that he likes better to reside in my house than his own, and though I should greatly prefer, as far as I am myself concerned, that he should never enter my doors again, I have concealed the feeling as well as I could, from respect to her who is no more. Yet, nevertheless, I very strongly suspect that he dislikes me about as heartily as I dislike him, and that he is pretty nearly as well aware as I am myself, that his visits here are a nuisance to me; but if this be so, he has the disagreeable sort of courage which leads people to brave all things rather than give up any scheme upon which they have set

their hearts. That Mr. Selcroft has set his heart upon passing a considerable portion of his existence at Harley Court is perfectly evident, and the means which he is at present employing to obtain this object are furnished by my intense anxiety about the health and welfare of my dear little boy. Even Mrs. Selcroft, who, if she did not think it her bounden duty to echo every word uttered by her husband, would be, I believe, a very harmless, good sort of woman, even she, with all her gentleness, has taken it into her head to talk to me in a very authoritative style upon the absolute necessity of her very frequent inspection and general superintendence of my nursery. Now, of course, I need not profess to you my perfect consciousness of my own profound ignorance on such matters, or the more than willingness or than mere ordinary gratitude with which I should welcome advice and assistance on a point which interests me so nearly. But——let Lucy, dear good girl, speak on the subject. She will make you understand the question at issue better than I can do. Read this

etter aloud, Fanny," he added, putting Lucy's pistle into her hand, "and then you shall oth give me an opinion as to what I had est do in order to guard against the mis-ortune which threatens me."

Fanny immediately obeyed him, and very listinctly read Lucy's letter, from the first vord to the last. "It is a charming letter," he said, returning it to him; "I think it a ery charming letter."

"It is admirable!" exclaimed Lady Frances, warmly. "You could not possibly have introduced your new sister to us, Harley, in a more favourable manner. Both head and heart are right there, no doubt whatever can exist about that. And now, you poor persecuted papa, let us take your case under consideration. Thoughts to counsel! Let me see; to be, or not to be, a victim, is the question. I think you had better tell this admirable Miss Lucy to give a gentle hint to her papa upon the utter——"

"What!" exclaimed Fanny, eagerly, "after the dear girl so earnestly implores him, or, at any rate, so distinctly desires him not to

betray her having written at all? That letter has not made a sufficient impression upon you, Aunt Frances."

"Upon my word you wrong me, Fanny!" replied her aunt. "And, as a proof of it, let me assure you that, instead of feeling towards this young lady as a stranger, I shall never think of her again but as a high-minded, right-feeling girl, with whom I should rejoice to become personally acquainted. My blunder was but the forgetfulness of a moment, and arose from my anxiety to get your brother out of the trap that seems yawning for him."

"Well, then, I will forgive you," returned her niece, "and the more readily because you have spoken a word, perhaps without knowing it, which points both to a safe and a pleasant path by which he may escape. You say, Lady Frances, that you should rejoice to become personally acquainted with this Lucy Selcroft—and heaven knows I share the wish! What then should prevent Henry's immediately writing to Lucy's mother, and telling her, without taking the slightest notice of our friend's epistle, that his aunt and sister would

) much pleased if she would permit Miss
lcroft to join them at Harley Court; and then
: might add, you know, that her doing so
)uld insure a constant account of her little
phew's progress for the satisfaction of his
ndmamma. Don't you think this would
a very good scheme, Henry?"

"Excellent, Fanny, in every way," replied
: brother, with great animation. "I am
'e yon will like her, for she is gay-hearted,
affected, and sensible, and the idea of your
king acquaintance with her, without the
adful drawback of her father's presence, is
lightful to me. What say you, Aunt
)nkton?"

"Say!" replied Lady Frances; "I say,
phew Harley, that I know nothing that I
ould like better, at this moment, than the
aking personal acquaintance with the young
dy who wrote that letter. Do you think it
kely that her mother will make any objection
her coming?"

"Her mother, no. Nor would it affect the
lestion by the weight of a feather, if she
d," replied Henry. "But I hope for some-

thing more important than her mother's consent. I hope for the consent of that smooth-worded tyrant, her father, because I do not see how he can invent any decently plausible excuse for refusing it."

"Away, then!" cried Fanny, "and write with all possible skill and caution. I will never forgive you if you leave the slightest possibility of his guessing that Lucy has written to you."

This was the first time that Henry's sister had ever designated Miss Selcroft by her Christian name. This was seemingly a very trifling circumstance, but Henry felt that there was a good deal more in it than met the ear, and it was with a well-pleased, though not a conspicuous smile that he thought, as he left the room to write the commanded epistle, that his anticipations of the effects likely to be produced by Lucy's letter, showed that he knew his womankind well.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE letter was written, and a very proper nd judicious letter it was, as was proved by ie result; for the return of the post brought om Lucy herself a delighted acceptance of e invitation, with an assurance that her amma would herself have had the pleasure answering her kind letter, had she not en obliged to take rather a long drive, in der to return the visit of the most distant quaintance on their visiting list.

This very satisfactory epistle, however, was t despatched without considerable domestic ficulty. Mrs. Selcroft scarcely allowed her-

self the necessary time for reading Mr. Harley's letter before, according to the law in such cases made and provided, she handed it across the breakfast-table to her husband. She said not a word as she did so; but had Mr. Selcroft condescended to to look at her (which he did not) as he impatiently held out his hand to receive it, he would have perceived that rather a vivid blush had taken the place of her usually delicately pale complexion.

The change in his own, however, as he perused this very unexpected production, was more striking still, for from his lofty forehead to his handsome chin, he was for one short moment almost purple. Poor Lucy meanwhile became very considerably paler than usual: she was sitting upon thorns, for she had caught sight of the well-known postmark, which left no possibility of doubt upon her mind, that the letter which caused this vehement emotion was from Henry Harley; neither was it easy to doubt, as she glanced at the angry face of her father, that the hint which she had despatched to Harley Court had caused so strong a feeling of indignation

aster as to have made him altogether
r her injunctions to secresy.
before she had time to decide whether
med him or herself most, Mr. Selcroft
the letter to her, saying, while an
ity of scorn curled his lip into a very
ort of smile: "Though last, Miss Lucy,
rtainly are not least in this affair.
ad your brother-in-law's letter."
Selcroft was by no means a coward,
from nature or education, for she had
ccustomed to do battle with dear, dar-
pa, when neither her mother nor poor
could have found courage to say a
But now she positively trembled.
unately, however, she was not too much
ied to read the letter, and great indeed
e delight, as well as the relief, with
he did so. Her first distinct thought
mental apology to Henry for having
l him—the next was something very
fiance of dear, darling papa. For Lucy,
know, was a very quick-witted girl, and
the twinkling of an eye, that this was
invitation to be refused with impunity.

She knew that her father stood in considerable awe of the often-quoted name of the Lady Frances, and that the achieving a personal acquaintance with her was felt to be both an important and a difficult manœuvre. But now, for the first time, the name of Lady Frances was brought forward in connexion with that of Selcroft, and that in so courteous a manner as at once to dissipate all the difficulties which had seemed to surround this greatly desired project of a personal acquaintance.

Her colour was still a little heightened, but all symptoms of trembling had disappeared, when she returned the letter to her father, saying, with a very happy smile, "How exceedingly kind in Mr. Harley! Isn't it, papa? And how very flattering on the part of Lady Frances Monkton and Miss Harley! I have always felt that there was something exceedingly awkward, when speaking of Harley Court, to be obliged to confess that we knew neither of the ladies, even by sight. That will be over now, for ever and always."

"But do you not think, Miss Lucy, that it

ıld have been rather more civil still, if
ıelf and your mother had been included in
invitation?" said Mr. Selcroft, somewhat
rningly, but still with an aspect greatly
irate than before the skilful words spoken
such particularly good season by his
ghter.

ıucy seemed to ponder his words very
berately before she answered them; and
ı she said very quietly, but with a good
l of decision of manner, "No, dear papa,
lo not. Had this letter contained an
tation to the whole Selcroft family, we
ld only have put one interpretation on it,
ıely, that he was anxious about his little
, and wished us all, and mamma parti-
ırly, to be there, just at this time when
s Harley expects to be very much occupied
invitations from her old friends and neigh-
rs. But the invitation contained in this
er is evidently of a very different and a
ch more flattering kind. It speaks dis-
ctly of a wish to bring us acquainted with
ladies of his family, and I do not think
could do so in any way so easy and so

:al as by inviting me, as it were, in their
es. A gentleman and a clergyman in
r station, dear papa, cannot, of course, be
ked to leave your house and your parish in
e same unceremonious manner that I can
e; and therefore I confess it strikes me that
unless you have changed your mind about
wishing to become acquainted with Lady
Frances Monkton, this letter must be exactly
the sort of thing you would like."

It would have been scarcely possi
for Lucy to have uttered a more judic
harangue. Mr. Selcroft, who very rarely
his temper, immediately recovered it nov
he then very distinctly perceived that
existing circumstances) the acccpti
invitation for Lucy would be more
advance him in the way he wished t
anything else which, at the present
he had the power of doing, and,
that nothing would be more lik
him in a contrary direction than
it.

No sooner had he come to t
than he resolved to do gracef

nutes before he had resolved not to
ll, and, causing his features very
o resume their usual amiable expres-
said:

aps you are right, Lucy. On second
, I am rather inclined to think that
Iarley does mean to be very civil in
this invitation specially to you; for
e certain that two young ladies are
ely to form an intimate sort of sister-
macy by being brought together in
than if a more ceremonious union of
families had taken place. You have,
, my permission, my dear, to answer
er yourself. I shall prefer this to the
ng your mother to answer it, as it
re as a hint to him that he ought,
y subject of the least real importance,
ss all communications to me. How-
enry is still a very young man, and
, therefore, excuse him if occasionally
s himself either ignorant or unmindful
tte. Go then, my dear Lucy, if you
ished your breakfast, and tell your
in-law that I shall send you, with

your mother's confidential attendant, by
railroad, on the fifteenth, and that you s
expect to find one of his carriages waiting
you at the station. You will, of course, b
me your epistle to read, always remembe
that neither on this or any other occa
should I choose that any letter should be
from this house without its being first
mitted to my inspection."

Did these words produce any painful
sation in the mind of Lucy?

No. Perhaps she was too happy t
capable of feeling anything like pain
being reminded of the act which had
her so. Nevertheless, she did look a
embarrassed for a moment, but her fath
not observe it, for he was already ver
in arranging mentally how soon after
departure he should be able to fin
tolerably plausible excuse for following

Lucy's epistle was short, but very
written, and perfectly fulfilled her p
making her brother-in-law underst
she was very grateful to him for all
contained, and still more for what

her father neither did nor could find
ing in it beyond a cordial and well-
d acceptance of his invitation.
moral of all which, is that parents
ike Mr. Selcroft, have the happiness of
sing a good and affectionate daughter,
o well to content themselves with the
g, while they carefully avoid the dan-
attempt of endeavouring to convert
ıto a hood-winked slave. It is just
le that occasionally such a plan may
r with a wife, but with a daughter, unless
ppen to be an idiot, NEVER.
happy Lucy's journey under the pro-
ı of her mother's elderly and very re-
ble waiting-woman, was performed with-
tigue or difficulty of any kind, and she
ıoreover, the satisfaction of finding her
r-in-law in the carriage which was wait-
her at the station. This attention was

Lucy Selcroft was not naturally a shy girl, but nevertheless she certainly did feel a little nervous at the idea of this first introduction to the ladies of the Harley family.

If she had been about to make the acquaintance of an uncle and a brother of Henry's, she would not have thought about it half so much. She was young, well-looking, and well-dressed, and not so stupid as to be unconscious of these advantages; but unfortunately for the composure of her spirits, she was conscious also that ladies were by no means so easily propitiated by them as gentlemen. However, the having the arm of her brother-in-law to support her as she entered the usual morning sitting-room, rendered the task so comparatively easy, that no more was left of her timidity than sufficed to increase, very becomingly, the delicate carnation of her cheek.

Both the ladies rose with flattering alacrity to welcome her, and her reception was exactly such as to add to her natural wish to please them, the pleasant consciousness that they wished to please her.

Nothing could be more natural than that

an acquaintance so begun, should speedily ripen into easy and agreeable intimacy. The very decided proof which Lucy had given of her averseness to obtrude her family upon them, was an effectual antidote to her receiving any share of the pretty strong feeling of dislike for the Selcroft connexion, which a variety of circumstances had tended to create in the hearts both of the aunt and niece; and though nothing in the least degree approaching to a discussion of this connexion took place between them, Lucy speedily comprehended the real state of the case, and enjoyed all the comfort which could be derived from the conviction that she at least was quite safe from every imputation of wishing to profit by the short and melancholy union between the families, for the purpose of forcing herself upon them in any way.

Had it not been for the lucky letter which the poor girl had written with such praiseworthy purpose, but with so much real pain and reluctance, this perfectly good understanding would probably never have existed between them, for Lucy Selcroft, with all her good

gifts, and she had many, would scarcely have escaped unscathed from the sort of analytical process to which a girl standing in such a position as she did, relatively to her new acquaintance, is sure to be subjected.

Not that Lady Frances or Fanny Harley were either of them likely to be blind to her prettiness, her cleverness, or her good-humour; but they would have been sure to find out that she had not that last high finish which, though the want of it can, and very often is, dispensed with, when the deficiency is atoned for by more important good qualities, rarely fails of being felt instantaneously, and afterwards as a cause of dislike, where no counteracting inducement to *like* exists to prevent it.

The time had been, before the influence of Frederica had taught Fanny Harley a better mode of estimating the worth of her fellow-creatures, that she would have been as likely as most people to have discovered and felt the influence of all such little deficiencies. But now, partly because her cure was really a radical cure, partly because a deeply felt, but never-mentioned tenderness for her lost friend,

ade every word she had ever uttered, dear
ıd precious to her, and partly from the
ıanner in which this personal acquaintance
ith Lucy had begun; for all and each of
ıese causes, Fanny did not permit herself to
iscover anything in her young companion
apable of chilling the cordial goodwill which
he felt towards her.

Lady Frances too, immediately began to
eat her as a favourite; yet she smiled
uietly aside, as she watched the growing
ıtimacy between the young ladies, and medi-
ıted on the varieties of character, aspect, and
ıanner, between Fanny's present friend and her
ast. Had her ladyship, however, thoroughly
nderstood Fanny, this quiet, quizzing, little
mile might have been spared, for she would
ave found neither caprice nor shadow of
hanging in her niece, who, with all her sincere
gard and liking for Lucy Selcroft, was no
ore likely to place her side by side in her
art with Frederica Rittesberg, than she was
confound the Pic du Midi and the gardens
the Tuilleries in her memory.

CHAPTER XIX.

The following fortnight passed ve
santly at Harley Court; no single
stance of any kind occurred to jar the
harmony which reigned among th
assembled there. The little boy, so i
a personage in the estimation of al
each of them, seemed in their ey
improving in health, beauty, and int
with every passing day; the wea
beautiful the flowers blooming and t

ɡ some pleasant engagement either at
r abroad.
ılas!

Malignant fate sat by and smiled!"

e all this very innocent enjoyment was
ɔn, with every appearance of being
ɔ last, sorrow and mischief were busily
at no great distance.
alking party had been arranged at
ɜt, in preference either to driving or
ɔn account of the bright beauty of the
, and of the autumnal freshness of the
ch they all agreed would render the
ːtive exercise the best. Accordingly
ı hour before noon the party assembled
brary, and were chatting and laughing
ery appearance of being all of them
nost happy state of spirits, when the
ıs thrown widely open, with rather
ble energy, by an elderly domestic
l been in the habit of performing this
Harley Court for the last fifteen years,
ɔ performed it now in a manner which
plainly as such an act could speak,

"Dearly beloved master! behold the blessing I have brought you!"

He did not, however, trust the announcement which it was his duty to make solely to his own eloquent manner of opening the door, but added, in a voice quite sufficiently clear to be heard by every one in the room, although at least three out of the four were all talking together, "MR. AND MRS. SELCROFT!"

It may be doubted whether the announcement of her Majesty's approach *in propria persona*, could have produced a more startling effect; a fact which might very probably have been highly satisfactory to Mr. Selcroft, could he have been fully aware of it, but which it is probable Mrs. Selcroft might not have enjoyed so much.

Lucy Selcroft's pretty face became in an instant very nearly of a colour to match the crimson curtains of the room, but her brother-in-law, Henry Harley, of Harley Court, very decidedly looked paler than he had done the moment before, and the expression of his countenance was so completely changed, that it was not easy to believe he was the same

If his sister, whose eye was immediately
:d upon him, had never believed before
he was capable of being very angry, she
ved it then ; and as to Lady Frances, she
30 extremely classical in her emotion, that
eemed determined to verify a fable of old,
)oking as nearly as possible as if she had
turned to stone. It was, in short, a *coup-*
:éâtre of the most effective kind.

ut the most striking effect produced by
· entrance, or at least that which made
f most immediately felt by poor Mrs. Sel-
, was the transition from general chatter-
and laughing, to total silence. A moment
re a small pistol might have been fired
:ably near them with wonderfully little
:t ; now, a kitten could not have cried
:w," without producing a very startling
ation indeed !

'oor Mrs. Selcroft, to do her justice, was
so hardened by her long course of conjugal
dience as to be insensible to the effect of
r unexpected appearance upon the feelings
he party, and really felt, dear good woman,
f she must fall prostrate, if not very speedily

invited to sit down; but not so her lord and husband.

He saw, perhaps quite as plainly as she did, that their sudden *entrée* had not been productive of any very pleasurable feelings to the party they had thus found so very gaily and happily assembled together; but for this he cared not one single farthing, being fully as well pleased at the idea of making good his entrance among them by the influence of his dearly beloved authority and his boasted knowledge of human character, as he would have been to see every hand extended to welcome him from mere ordinary common-place civility.

The use which he made of his knowledge of human nature on the present occasion, was to convince himself that his son-in-law was of too gentle a spirit to offer any permanent or effectual resistance to the steadfast will and decided purpose of so firm a character and commanding an intellect as his own.

"I see plainly that he is just about as angry at our unexpected arrival, as it is in his tranquil temperament likely he should ever be

ıything. But I know how to manage
ɪleman."
were the thoughts which passed through
ɜterly mind of the Rector of Elmland
ɾton, as he watched, without for an
losing the benign smile which decorated
ɑ features, the greatly less tranquil
ance of Henry Harley.
though he both looked and meditated
ɑt he saw, Mr. Selcroft lost not a
; in idle speculation, but stepping
forward towards the master of the
ɪe laid a hand caressingly and affec-
y on his arm, and looking with unalter-
ɑndness into his face, exclaimed, "How
ittle treasure, Harley?"
the moment the device was perfectly
ul, for how could such an inquiry from
grandfather be answered harshly by a
ther?
ry answered instantly, "Well; my son is
y well, sir." But even as he spoke the
he felt the intolerable pressure of the
which forced him to utter them; and
Mr. Selcroft had unclasped his up-lifted

hands as he fervently pronounced the words, "THANK GOD!" Henry Harley had taken his resolution, and instantly decided upon shutting up Harley Court for a few years, and immediately taking his child abroad, accompanied, if possible, by his aunt and sister.

Henry Harley was not apt to take sudden resolutions, but on the present occasion the doing so was a great relief to him, and enabled him at once to recover his composure, and to perform the duties of a son-in-law and a host to the unoffending Mrs. Selcroft, in the most correct manner possible.

Notwithstanding Mr. Selcroft's profound knowledge of human nature, he blundered greatly in his interpretation of character on the present occasion, mistaking strength for weakness, and rebellion for passive obedience. But whatever might be the source of the composure both of feature and manner with which Henry approached Mrs. Selcroft, his doing so was a very seasonable relief to her, for though totally without the power of preventing this most unjustifiable inroad into his family circle, she was very keenly alive to its impropriety; and

en if the case had been different, and that ey had found themselves in accordance with ı invitation from the master of the house stead of in defiance of what seemed, in her dgment, to be very nearly a prohibition, she ould still have felt that she wanted all the ıpport his personal attention could afford her, ı order that she might be enabled to endure, ith courage and decorum, the almost hostile spect of his right honourable aunt the Lady rances.

And yet Lady Frances Monkton was one of he last women in the world who would have illingly treated such a person as Mrs. Selroft with anything approaching rudeness. But the feeling of indignation roused within her at this audacious attempt to take possession f her very excellent nephew and his castle y storm, rendered her positively incapable of ttending to anything else; she was, in fact, retty nearly unconscious that any such person s Mrs. Selcroft was in the room, and when, ith the frown and the step of an offended mpress, she stalked majestically out of it, the

vigorously seizing upon the arm of her niece in order to enforce upon her the necessity of her leaving it also, was more for the sake of withdrawing herself from a scene where she found she might be tempted to speak her sentiments more distinctly than she had any right to do, than from any intention of treating the mother of their excellent young friend, Lucy, with rudeness.

But Mrs. Selcroft, who was only aware that she hadleft the room, taking her niece with her, because she and her husband had entered it, felt utterly and completely overwhelmed with mortification and sorrow. Poor Lucy, who had flown to her side the moment that her first sensation of dismay had sufficiently subsided to give her power to move at all, besought her in vain to leave the room, and accompany her to her own apartment. For Lucy, too, had caught sight of the altered countenance of Henry at the moment of her father's entrance, and certainly was of opinion that her persecuted brother-in-law would for himself, at length, under the necessity of making her father understand without ceremony

my, that it was his decided intention to
nain master of his own house.

But she felt, if possible, still more relieved
d comforted, than even poor, trembling
rs. Selcroft herself, by the approach of
enry, and his amiable manner of addressing
r. "I fear, my dear Mrs. Selcroft that your
urney has fatigued you," said he.

"Perhaps she had better repose on the sofa
your room, dear Lucy, while her own apart-
ent is made ready for her?" he added.
And if I might venture to turn doctor, I
ould prescribe a glass of wine, for it will be
o long for her to wait till luncheon time."

Never was a kind word uttered in better
ason. It seemed to cure all Mrs. Selcroft's
aladies as if by magic, and she was perfectly
ady to confess, that she had been wrong in
pposing for a moment, that her highly gifted
sband had made any blunder whatever by
esenting himself thus unexpectedly at Harley
urt. The sudden exit of the two ladies,
leed, was certainly very rude; but it was
possible that any body could have foreseen
t their haughty characters would be so

very uncivilly displayed; and finally she came to the conclusion, that the only way of treating such rudeness, was the not caring for it.

All these consolatory thoughts passed through her head as she sat listening with a gentle smile to Henry's kind speeches, and when he ceased she rose with every appearance of being quite recovered, and said that she should like very much to go into Lucy's room for a little while, because, of course there were a hundred things that she wanted to say to her; but that her first visit must be to her darling grandchild.

To this very natural proposition Henry bowed without speaking, and Lucy felt to her fingers' ends that notwithstanding his amiable manner of receiving her mother, he was no longer disposed to admit that the tie between them should be considered as a just and sufficient cause for having his dwelling invaded at all times and seasons, without leave asked, or even notice given. So far did the penetration of Lucy carry her, and she was heartily sorry for the effect, and heartily ashamed of the cause. But this said penetration did not

able her to discover the new-born sternness purpose which was at work within him, and ich in fact, was at that moment, quite as fluential as his natural kindness of temper, in us enabling him to retain his usual gentle- ss of demeanor, despite the very unusual eling of irritation which Mr. Selcroft's ma- euvre had produced.

It was impossible that any grandmamma uld have been otherwise than pleased at the pearance of the little heir, for though very tall, he looked the very picture of health and osperity, and ere she had dandled him for e minutes, the good, tranquil-spirited Mrs. lcroft seemed totally to have forgotten all r troubles and alarms, and to be as perfectly ntented and happy as if she had made this mewhat perilous journey in perfect con- rmity with her own wishes, instead of very cided opposition to them.

Henry Harley meanwhile, having opened e door for the egress of Lucy and her mother, emed to think himself released from the ne- ssity of remaining any longer in the society his father-in-law; and having, without clos-

ing the door, returned for a moment to the place where the dignified rector was still standing, smiling with the most benignant sweet temper as he gazed upon a distant herd of deer in the park; he said, "You will excuse my leaving you, sir, for I have an engagement with the ladies of my family;" and having said this, he bowed slightly and left the room.

Mr. Selcroft was a little startled by the manner of his son-in-law. It was new to him. He had seen him cold, before, but never before had he seen him haughty.

"This is the effect, I presume, of his having his ladyship aunt in the house with him," thought the not highly nurtured rector. But he snapped his fingers as the explanation occurred to him, not however from rejecting, but from despising it.

"I have the master-key of his pride, as well as of his house," he murmured. "His son and heir is dearer to his pride, and dearer to his heart also, than all the maiden aunts in the universe, ay, if they were royal, instead of only right honourable." And with this sooth-

ıg reflection, the grandfather of the future ossessor of Harley Court stalked forth into ts portico with a great deal of the feeling, ınd with a little of the air of a conqueror, who had just taken possession of an important fortress.

CHAPTER XX.

It is by no means necessary for us to follow Lucy and her mother into the nursery; the perfectly satisfactory nature of their sojourn there may be easily imagined, as the baby's nurse being a shrewd, as well as a healthy woman, and fully aware, therefore, of the importance of propitiating the favour of an experienced grandmamma, even though a titled aunt was in the house, seeing (as Mrs. Selcroft would have herself said) that the said aunt was a maiden one.

Neither is it difficult to guess how they talked together on leaving the nursery, and retiring to the apartment allotted to Lucy;

erything that passed then, was exactly
was sure to pass under the circum-
s. Lucy, who had learnt by long ex-
ce to know how far a pattern wife
be safely entrusted with a real secret,
ot a word respecting her own important
to Henry; but short of this, she had
dow of reserve with her mother, and she
bed to her, in a very lively and agreeable
r, the kind reception she had met with
Lady Frances and Miss Harley, as well
all their kindness since, and all the
nt engagements with the neighbouring
es, which had occupied the happy fort-
which had followed.

s. Selcroft listened, and sighed, and
l, and listened. "Your father, Lucy,"
id, "is, as we both perfectly well know,
f the most admirable men that ever was
; but, nevertheless, it certainly is possible
he may now and then be mistaken.
d, I believe that it would be a sin to
it, because, after all, my dear girl, he is
man, and as such he must, as the Holy
tures teach, be fallible. But if this be

possible on any occasion, depend upon it, Lucy, it is the case now. We ought not to have come down here in this manner, etc., etc., etc." To all which Lucy listened dutifully, and answered rationally, which is as much as to say that the daughter perfectly agreed with the mother in thinking that, on this occasion at least, the rector of Barton and Elmland had not been divinely inspired.

That all this confidential, and, in some degree, unreserved talk, was both interesting and soothing to the mother and daughter, is very certain, but as it did not lead to any practical results, it was not very important. The conversation that took place between Henry Harley, his aunt, and his sister, as they promenaded for an hour and a-half in one of the most sheltered walks in the grounds was more so, inasmuch as it did lead to practical results, and that without any unnecessary delay.

Scarcely did the trio find themselves in the well-known walk which they sought, apparently by common consent, than Henry exclaimed, "Now, then, you can comprehend

tter than any description of mine could ve enabled you to do it, what manner of an I have to deal with in this father-in- . . . . Now you may perceive, from what rt of persecution it was, that dear, good icy's letter was intended to save me."

"Means more effectual than any dear, good icy is likely to suggest must be resorted to the purpose of preventing a repetition of " replied Lady Frances, in a voice that sitively trembled with indignation. "Surely, rely, Henry!" she continued, "you must ready have shown something like weakness your treatment of this audacious man, or could never have ventured upon presenting mself in this manner, after you had ex- icitly given him to understand that it was t convenient for you to receive him at esent."

"It may be so," replied Henry. "It is, think, rather difficult to say where decency ds and weakness begins with such a man Mr. Selcroft. But he has given me a son to-day that may assist me, I think,

as to the proper regulation of my future conduct."

"That Henry has done nothing which could be considered as encouragement for such a proceeding in the eyes of Mr. Selcroft's wife, was made sufficiently evident by her aspect when she entered to-day," said Fanny. "I think I never saw any one look so perfectly overpowered by shame and embarrassment. Despite my indignation I really and truly pitied the poor woman. But neither our pity for her, nor our liking for her nice daughter Lucy, must be suffered to interfere with any of the preventive measures which are at work in your head, Henry, for your future protection."

"Nor shall it, dear Fanny," replied her brother, very gravely. "Nothing but the decided disapproval of my aunt and yourself will prevent my placing myself beyond the reach of so terrible an annoyance. I really feel ashamed," he continued, "to make you both the victims of my strangely disagreeable position, and that, too, after your having

iven up all your own plans in order to ccommodate yourselves to mine. Never-neless, I think there is no alternative, and hat I must at once make up my mind to go broad again. The great question is, will you nd Fanny go with me?"

Lady Frances looked at him, shook her ead, and laughed.

"The great question?" she repeated. "No, Henry, no, that is not the great question. f you could manage all your affairs as easily s you can regulate the movements of your ister and myself, you would have no great ifficulties to complain of. But is it really ecessary, my dear nephew, that a man in our station of life, with all the duties of a ealthy landlord and a large landholder to ulfil, is it really necessary that you should ave your splendid home, and fly your ountry, solely in order to prevent an elderly ergyman, who has or ought to have the uty of two parishes to employ him; is it bsolutely necessary for you to run away erely to prevent his laying his hands upon

I hold myself quite ready to retre
proposal, under shelter of the cl
specifies that I am ready to ab
desperate project if it meets the c
approval of my aunt or my sist
put myself completely in your h
satisfied that I am in every way sa
so, first, from my sincere and long
confidence in your judgment, and
from my strong conviction that
be as little inclined to expose me
I dread as I should be myself. . . .
then, dear aunt! State your wis
subject we are discussing, and be a
both I and Fanny, also, shall liste
as commands we are determined to

"Away with your obedience, you

eing by nature, I believe, rather more
and hot in quarrel than yourself, I
be tempted, if the affair were wholly
to try the effect of a frank declaration
tilities, announcing, in plain and intel-
language, that if, for the future, Mr.
ft attempts to effect, either by surprise
ence, the invasion of your house, 'which
ur castle,' you shall think yourself
d in resisting the attempt according
"

plain English, you would have me tell
replied Henry, "that if, for the future,
empts to enter my doors without invi-
he shall forcibly be turned out of
"

ly Frances said nothing; but after the
al of a moment she nodded her head
atively.

ady Frances, I cannot do this!" said
, gravely. "The mother of my son was
ughter."

ou are right, and I am wrong, Harley,"
ed his aunt, earnestly. "Yes, you are
in every way. It is certainly a singular

predicament for a man to be placed in; but be this as it may, I really believe that your own scheme is the easiest, and the best by which to escape from it. At any rate, it will prove to him very effectually that, however desperate and courageous this scheme of invasion may be, you can at least command the means to escape, if not to conquer."

"And to escape is to conquer in this case," said Fanny.

"Most assuredly!" replied her brother, "nay, it is the only conquest I aim at, or wish to achieve. Let me only feel myself beyond the reach of such sensations as I experienced this morning, when I heard the name of Selcroft announced, and I ask for no greater triumph."

"And whither shall we go?" said Fanny, fixing her eyes on the face of her brother.

"To Paris," replied Henry. "I feel that I am bound to return you to the spot whence you came, when you so kindly and so readily obeyed my call for help. That you have not been able to secure it is no fault of yours, and the only comfort I can have under the failure

will be derived from assisting you to see and enjoy all that I snatched you from when I enticed you to exchange Paris for Harley Court."

"If Harley Court had been Harley Court as it ought to be, you would find it difficult, I think, to make either of us believe that we liked Paris better," said Lady Frances; "but as things are, we have reason to be thankful that it is neither Siberia nor Botany Bay to which we are to be banished."

"And the climate is a very good one for children, is it not?" demanded the young father.

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed both ladies at once; and Fanny zealously added, "You have only to walk one single morning in the Tuilleries, Henry, when the weather is fine, in order to convince yourself that some of the most prosperous and healthy-looking children in the world are to be found in Paris."

"Then so let it be, my dear sister conspirators!" returned Henry. "We will let the invaders, partly for poor Lucy's sake, eat their dinners in peace to-day, and before you are

ready for your ten o'clock breakfast to
morning, Lady Frances, I flatter myse
I shall have found a fitting opportu
making them all understand the nece
departing from the garrison with a
delay as possible."

In conformity to the resolution th
pressed, the meeting of the whole p
the drawing-room about ten minutes
dinner was attended with no startling
stration of feeling on any side. The
of the family were introduced to M
Mrs. Selcroft, and if there was more c
mony than of cordiality in their
towards them it was only considere
symptom of aristocratic haughtiness, ex
detestable, and deserving of all contem
not amounting to any overt act of
which could justify a remonstrance.
evening passed away as such an eveni
be easily supposed to have passed.
Frances applied herself with unequall
severance to her knitting; Henry
Lucy to play chess, which they did
intermission till the biscuits and win

their appearance; Fanny Harley, with the thoughts of Frederica's christian lectures, as she called them, very actively at work within her, placed her embroidery frame in such a position as enabled her to talk a great deal to Mrs. Selcroft; and Mr. Selcroft took refuge in the "Quarterly Review."

In this manner the short evening wore away, with as little fatigue or impatience on any part as could have been reasonably expected; though it is very certain that there was not one of the little party who did not rejoice heartily when it was over.

Lady Frances Monkton and, by complaisance, her niece Fanny also, were late breakfasters; but Henry Harley was not so, nay, he so greatly disapproved the habit that not even his deference for his aunt could induce him to adopt it, and when the family trio were alone, the aunt and niece always breakfasted tête-à-tête in the dressing-room of the former.

This arrangement had not been changed by the arrival of Lucy, who had been immediately admitted to the dressing-room party;

but now a family breakfast-table was spread, as heretofore, at nine, and Mr. and Mrs. Selcroft met their host there very punctually at that hour. Moreover, Lucy was already at her post as tea-maker, when the others made their appearance, and then it was that Henry felt the time arrived which was to witness his first very decided effort for the recovery of his precious freedom.

CHAPTER XXI.

"How is our precious boy to-day?" were the first words spoken upon Henry's entering the room where the Selcroft trio were already assembled, and were of course spoken by the devoted grandfather, who seemed, by fixing his anxious eyes on the face of his son-in-law, to suppose that the young father had just left the nursery.

"I have not seen my son this morning, sir," replied Henry, passing on to Mrs. Selcroft and Lucy, and offering his morning salutations, accompanied by an extended hand to each.

"Ah-h!" sighed Mr. Selcroft, seating himself at the table. "Young men will and must

be young men, whatever their situati
be! And perhaps it is best that it sh
so! Were you, my dear Harley, one
anxious about that precious babe as I
could no more sit down to eat your
meal without having ascertained how
passed the night, than you could take
to the moon!"

"It is, as you say, sir, decidedl
better for me that it is not so; for if
my tranquillity would be destroyed,
dear little boy not at all the better
replied Henry.

"Very likely, very likely," replied
croft. "And as Providence has so a
it, we cannot doubt its being for the b
your case too, my dear Harley, it
evident that this unerring Providenc
watch and ward over your dear boy b
agents. Where a babe is blessed with
grandmother as my wife, and such an
Lucy, there certainly is no great need
young father should torment himself wi
anxiety upon subjects that he does not
stand."

"Come, come," replied Henry, gaily, "I really must stop you there, sir. It is true that I have made my appearance at the breakfast-table without having first visited the nursery; but nevertheless, I will not admit the possibility that any human being existing cares so much about my child as I do myself. And of this, Mr. Selcroft, I am about to give stronger proof than could have been reasonably found in my seeing my boy before breakfast instead of after it."

"Nay, my dear Henry, do not fancy I mean to reproach you with want of affection for your child; on the contrary, I feel that you have given the strongest possible proof of your attachment to him by your evident wish, so clearly proved by your invitation to Lucy, of having some friend near him who may love him with a portion of his lost mother's love!"

The grandfather's voice of course trembled a little as he pronounced these last words; but he soon recovered himself, and added, cheerfully, "But let us hear what you were going to mention as an especial proof of your devotion to the precious darling?"

"This it is, Mr. Selcroft," replied Henry, very distinctly, but in a tone that betrayed no feeling, save that of wishing to make himself understood. "I am immediately going abroad with my aunt, Lady Frances Monkton, and my sister, and I shall take my little boy with me."

For a few seconds there was a pause of total silence, and then Mr. Selcroft, having suffered his knife and fork to drop upon his plate, raised his eyes and his clasped hands heavenwards, and exclaimed, in an accent that old Kemble might have envied, "Take your infant child abroad with you! Henry Harley, you are not in earnest! I know you are not in earnest—the thing is too monstrous to be possible! Yet the theme is not one well fitted for jesting, my good friend—at least not with us! It can be scarcely necessary that I should tell you how many lives are bound up with that of your precious boy! Where is the ardent love which we all bore to our lost Louisa? Where? save in the devoted attachment which we all feel for her child? Louisa, in her young beauty, gave her own life for

.t of her boy, and think you that we do
; cling to him as to a living legacy from
. ?"

This speech, accompanied as it was by an
mirably well adapted voice and manner,
;ht perhaps to have produced more effect
n it did on the heart and on the intentions
Henry Harley; but somehow or other, it
:cted him very little, which disappointing
t was pretty clearly manifested by the tone
his reply.

"You must permit me to doubt, Mr. Sel-
ft," said he, "that any one can feel an
:ction for this motherless little boy equal to
own. But, fortunately for me, the law of
land gives me the precedence, as well as
law of nature, and I will tell you very
nkly, that it is not my intention to yield
s precedence to any one. My son is very
:idedly the most precious treasure I possess,
d I would greatly prefer giving over the
nagement of my estate to another, than the
nagement of my boy."

When Henry Harley began speaking these
:y desperately decisive words, the eyes of

his reverend father-in-law were fixed upon his face with the most touching expression imaginable, the look being made up, as it were, of the affecting tenderness of a doating grandfather, and the thrilling authority derived from his sacred profession.

His wife and daughter did not dare to look at him, so certain did they feel that the expression of his countenance must be awfully severe.

Great then was their astonishment, and great their comfort also, when they heard him reply in accents of almost playful cheerfulness. "Assuredly, my dear Harley! Most assuredly, you are perfectly right. I do not mean exactly in taking your little boy abroad, to air that is not native to him, for I confess that I have heard the doing so denounced as dangerous; but right you most assuredly are in suffering no one, no, not even the parents of your lost wife, to interfere with your prerogative. We have at least the satisfaction of knowing that our precious little darling will, to the best of your judgment and experience, be reared carefully and judiciously, and this

ght to satisfy us,—the rest is in the hands Providence! But we are growing too grave, l that must not be, or we shall not be table companions to your charming sister, . Harley. It is really long since I have n any young lady whom I so much admired." "You do my sister great honour, sir," re-ed Henry, with rather a stiff bow; and sently added, "What will you do this morn-, dear Lucy? Both the open carriages are your service if you like to employ them."

"I might return your words, Mr. Harley," d his smiling father-in-law, "and say that u did my daughter great honour—nay, too ch honour, Harley; when her parents are sent, it is not for her to have a will on any ject. However, I am in no mood to quarrel th any one just now. The news of your dden return to the Continent has perfectly erwhelmed me. But I see, and I feel that ere is no appeal from it. Nevertheless, there still time left for me to make one request, ich I scarcely think you will refuse, because may be so very long a time before I make other. You talked, Harley, of immediately

going abroad, but you did not absolutely name the day for your departure. The favour I would petition for is, that you would permit our remaining with you for one week from the present time. It is probably the last visit we shall ever make to the spot where our beautiful Louisa passed her last days, and where her dear remains rest in the grave! A few very quiet days spent here with the consciousness that they are the last, would be soothing to me, though sad. As to your little boy, Harley, I confess to you that when he is taken from England, with no kindred matron eye to watch over him, I shall feel but too sure that I shall never behold him more! Therefore it is not any longer for his sweet sake that I wish to remain here during the few days I have mentioned, but rather for that of the ashes of his sainted mother! Will you grant this request, Mr. Harley?"

"Assuredly, sir," replied Henry, with an aspect and voice of the most perfect politeness, yet without being, in the very slightest degree, touched by the tenderly religious resignation of his pious father-in-law. But he felt that

ere was no plausible reason for refusing his quest; and in fact he granted it almost thout repugnance, so comforted did he l at the idea that he had at length disco-ed a method of bringing to a conclusion persecution from which he had suffered so erely.

"Thank you, my dear Harley! I thank most sincerely for this compliance with wishes; and now, daughter and wife, h be pleased to remember that I have not ained this, it may be, very inconvenient itation for you, in order that you may pass probably last week at Harley Court in rs and lamentations. On the contrary, I most anxious that the impression left on our minds by it should be agreeable. ho knows, indeed, but that some dozen ars hence, if we all survive, we may meet ain; and in that case how very much easanter our meeting will be if we so manage that our parting shall not be too painful!"

Mrs. Selcroft knew her husband pretty well; d Lucy Selcroft knew her father rather tter; and Henry Harley, perhaps, either

knew or guessed at the most essential qualities of his father-in-law more accurately than either. But they were now all three of them most completely thrown out, and it might be difficult to say which of the three felt the most completely conscious that they had not the least notion of what he was likely to do or to say next.

Neither of the party, however, were sufficiently curious, or ill-advised, to seek to discover more than it was his purpose to display to them. On the part of Henry this disinclination arose from his being too well satisfied with the position in which things now stood, to feel any inclination to risk its endurance by inquiring too curiously into its cause. Mrs. Selcroft, good lady, was ever well disposed to be lapped in ignorance, so long as the externals of all worldly affairs wore a peaceable aspect; and as for poor Lucy, she so unfeignedly dreaded the effect of every word proceeding from the lips of her father in the presence of Henry, that she would as soon have stirred the embers of a fire which threatened the destruction of the lordly Court House itself, as have said any-

ich might have led to a disclosure of
opinions, real sentiments, and sincere
on either side.
so the breakfast went on, and went
the very smoothest manner ima-

at are you going to do with yourself
ning?" said Mr. Selcroft, addressing
at its conclusion, with the friendly
ne who wished not to be separated
, if it were possible to avoid it. To
Henry, who felt towards Mr. Selcroft,
nankind alone," a degree of antipathy
early approached to hatred, replied,
absolutely obliged, Mr. Selcroft, to
yself during the whole of the morning.
you and the ladies like either to ride
, you have only to make your wishes
There are both carriages and horses
service."
ank you much," replied Mr. Selcroft,
ciously. "As far as I am concerned,
I shall prefer a little home ramble in
ounds, and a little dandling of my

grandson, to any more distant excursion, or more dissipated amusement."

Henry bowed his acquiescence, and presently added, addressing himself to Mrs. Selcroft, "My aunt and sister will be very happy to do the honours of some of our picturesque drives to you, Mrs. Selcroft. Lucy knows the way to Lady Frances' dressing-room, and will propose any plan to them that you may like to suggest. Good morning."

And with these words he rose from the breakfast-table, and left the room without waiting for any further rejoinder.

Whatever might have been the urgent business which compelled Henry Harley to absent himself, it did not require such red-hot speed in its execution, as to prevent his finding time to pay his morning compliments to his aunt and sister.

It was with an elastic step that he approached their door, and the very moment he opened it, they both perceived, before he uttered a word, that the great deed was done, and that somehow or other he had given the

reverend Mr. Selcroft effectually to understand that Harley Court was not to be his future home.

"It is all right!" cried Fanny, gaily clapping her hands. "So soon, too! What a bold fellow you are, Henry, to have ventured, and so suddenly, too, to give this most coolly audacious gentleman to understand, that his hopes of establishing a permanent lodgment at Harley Court were altogether vain and unsubstantial."

"Sit down, Harley, if only for five minutes," said Lady Frances. "I know it will not be right for us to have the air of holding conclave here, but I positively must know how he bore the announcement of your intended flight to the Continent."

"What he thought of it, or how he liked it," replied Henry, "it is quite beyond my power to say. Mr. Selcroft, I believe, is not in the habit of laying open the secrets of his bosom's lord to ordinary observers. Whether even his wife and daughter understood him, I greatly doubt—for myself I can answer for it, that I certainly did not. But this matters

little. He knows my purpose, and was too wise, I think, to attempt any opposition to it. He only asked rather sentimentally for permission to repose here for one week as a sort of resigned, though pathetic leave-taking, and to this humble request I have graciously acceded, not very well perceiving how it was possible to help it; so you will have to endure his presence for that period. But the change of scene which awaits you must enable you to bear it, dearly beloveds. And now I must mount and be off, because I have told the gentleman, in answer to his affectionate inquiry as to what I was going to do with myself, that I had business which would oblige me to be absent—so you will see no more of me till dinner-time. But, alas! what a proof am I about to give of my settled dislike to this man! Since you two came back to me I have been getting more attached to this sweet place every day, yet now I contemplate the leaving it again as a blessing and a jubilee!"

"Your absence need not last long, dear Harley," replied his aunt, who thoroughly sympathized with his regret at his being thus

rangely driven from his home. "I trust nd believe, that the spirited measure you ave adopted will effectually convince Mr. Selroft that he is not to take possession of your nansion, in right of his grandson, and when e is once thoroughly convinced of this, I preume that you may return to your country in afety."

"I accept your prophecy with all faith," he eplied; "as far as the future is concerned, I eally do believe that I am now tolerably safe; ut for the present, a vague fear of a *tête-à-tête* talk seems to haunt me, and I must allop for half-a-dozen miles before I shall eel myself in safety."

But Mr. Harley was quite mistaken. There as no danger whatever of his being talked to y Mr. Selcroft just at present, that gentleman having another object, for the successful chievement of which, the absence of the aster of the house was especially necessary.

It was therefore with extreme satisfaction, hat he watched the commencement of the allop upon which Henry depended for safety: t this was not quite all he wanted. It was

delightful to watch the celerity with which his son-in-law passed out of sight, but, as a completion of his preparatives, it was more delightful still to see a carriage containing Lady Frances, Mrs. Selcroft, her daughter Lucy, and Fanny Harley, set off in another direction, at a comfortable steady pace, which promised as well for the conveying them to a proper distance, as even the brisk gallop of Henry.

"Now for it, then!" exclaimed the watchful Mr. Selcroft, as he quietly stole out of his own apartment, and directed his noiseless tread towards the nursery. "Now, then, I may indulge without interruption in amusing myself a little with poor Louisa's dear boy." On reaching the nursery door, he gave a gentle, but perfectly audible tap.

"Come in!" said the important personage who had the honour of nourishing and nursing the heir of Harley Court.

Mr. Selcroft obeyed, opened the door, and walked in.

"Well, dear nurse! How are you?" said he, "and how is your precious nursling?"

"The young gentleman is quite well, sir,"

plied the woman; "and I don't believe that ere is many children of his age in the county, born so small as he was, as looks as fat nd as thriving as he does now."

This was said with perfect civility, nay ore, it was said with eagerness, for the oman was well-pleased at the opportunity of uffing herself and her boy; but, nevertheless, er accent had not that peculiarly sort of coaxng intonation, which females holding her ituation are apt to use when propitiating the avour of rich grandpapas; for to say truth, Mr. Selcroft had not one of those expensive earts, which indulge themselves in giving largesse to all those who in return give labour nd care to the darlings of their hearts.

Mr. Selcroft would have been ready to leclare himself exceedingly offended, had any ne ventured to hint to him that his grandon's wet-nurse was not sufficiently paid for er services by his son-in-law. And this loubtless was the feeling which had hitherto revented his ever taking the liberty of offering he said nurse any donation, fee, or reward of ny kind. And Mrs. Selcroft, in conformity

to her well-known principles, follo
example in this, as a matter of co
that the epithet most commonly bestow
them by the household, was that of
fisted curmudgeons."

But on the present occasion, the p
of Mr. Selcroft appeared to have und
radical revolution, and, in the opinio
nurse, a radical reform; for after loo
a minute or two with indescribable te
at the little round face of the baby,
out his purse, and deliberately e
therefrom two golden sovereigns, h
them in the hands of the nurse, say
considerable emotion as he did so—"
good woman! I have never seen thi
babe look so fat, and so well, as he
present. If I had, I should not have
long without writing my thanks in go
ters upon your hand. Go on, my d
woman, go on doing what I conside
right by the child, and you may find,
that the best part of your wages will
from Mr. Harley."

The woman looked puzzled, and

not been gold, she would probably have
l angry at the implied hint, that the
had not always looked so well as he did
esent. But as it was, she was too wise
nan to do anything but smile and be
ful.

'ou can't wonder, nurse," he resumed,
I should feel more than usually anxious
this dear babe! He is all that is left
f the lovely creature who died to give
irth!" And here Mr. Selcroft drew forth
ıcket-handkerchief.

Io, truly, sir, nobody can wonder as you
l be after making much of him, and he
ıutiful too, as well as so motherless!"

'ou have got a very important office,
and have perhaps more power than you
ware of yourself," said Mr. Selcroft, gently
ng his head, and holding up his fore-
very impressively; "and if you are the
sort of woman that I take you for, you
ıake use of your power, for the sake of
arling child, and for your own sake too,
Nurse, into the bargain."

e woman looked at him by no means

stupidly, for her aspect plainly indicated a shrewd suspicion that he meant *something*; and at the present stage of their conversation, this was quite as much as could be expected.

After the silence of a moment, during which she scrupled not to keep her eyes fixed upon his face, she said, "I don't that clearly understand, sir, what you mean about my having the power of doing anything particular by the child, except in course the keeping him, and watching him, by night and by day, as is my duty to do—and I defy anybody to say as I doesn't do that."

"And I will defy any one to say it either," he replied. "One has but to look at the fat little darling to see what a nurse you have been to him, in all ways.—And if I did not know it, I should not be speaking to you now in the manner I am doing. I have just given you a proof, I think, that I have a high opinion of you, and if you behave in such a manner as to keep up this good opinion, it is likely that you may find that there is more gold in the purse those sovereigns came from, and that a father who has lost such an angel daughter as

that dear boy's mother was to me, will think little of all he can give, and all he can do, to the nurse who faithfully tends him."

"And faithfully I have tended him sir, and by the blessing of God I'll go on doing the same, and that so as to satisfy even you, sir, if you be any ways reasonable."

"The more you know me, my good friend, the less likely you will be to fear that I should be unreasonable. But I am very uneasy in my mind, nurse, about this dear child! Not because I doubt your care of him. God knows no such thought ever entered my head! But I have some news to tell you, that will explain only too well why I am, and why I should be uneasy. But tell me, before I say anything more, whether you have not got a baby of your own, about the same age as our dear boy here?"

"Yes, indeed, have I, sir," replied the woman, "and Master Harley's foster brother is as beautiful a child—though I say it as shouldn't—as he is himself."

"And doubtless," he replied, "you love the little darling as well as we love this one?"

"I should be an unnatural monster not, sir," she replied.

"Of course you would. And of co would not very well like to be take where you would never be likely to again?" said Mr. Selcroft.

"Taken away? Never see him cried the woman in violent agitation. understand what you mean, sir, and believe that my master has any such ness in his thoughts."

"Keep yourself quiet, my good so turned Mr. Selcroft soothingly, "an God that you are a free English wor that you can't be made either to g stay, except by your own free will glad to see, however, that your heart right place, and that you are not like a sinful and unnatural thing, becau master ordered it."

"I think there is some mistake, the woman recovering herself, and very quietly. "I don't no way un what you are talking about, but I lieve any how that my master would

ing me to do anything sinful and unna-
ral."

"I suppose, nurse, that he does not think it
, but the thing he is going to do is this, my
ood friend. He is going to pack up every-
ing, and to go away from England into
reign countries, more than a thousand miles
ff, and you, and the child, and his aunt, and
is sister, are all to go with him. And now
hen I will leave you to judge what chance
ou will have of ever seeing your child
gain?"

Mr. Selcroft wished to make a strong im-
pression, and he had succeeded perfectly.
The poor woman looked utterly dismayed and
bewildered, and for a moment sat silently
staring at him; but then she took a long
breath as if to prepare herself for a parti-
cularly clear and distinct pronunciation of her
sentiments, and pronounced these emphatic
words: "My master wants to kidnap me a
thousand miles beyond sea, away from my
child and my husband?—I'll see him hanged
first."

It was scarcely possible that she could have made a more satisfactory declaration, and Mr. Selcroft upon hearing it gave her a little condescending friendly tap upon the shoulder, and replied, "You are, I see, an honest-hearted worthy woman, and I respect you sincerely. But it is no more than I expected from you. The same person who made so excellent a nurse was not likely to prove a bad mother. But I did not come here merely to tell you this disagreeable news, nurse. I came rather in the hope, that by consulting together, we might hit upon some means of preventing its ever coming true. It is much easier for a young man like your master to talk of doing a wild thing, than for him to find good and reasonable people to assist him in going through with it. If you refuse to go with him, my belief is, that he will give the scheme up altogether."

"No, he won't, sir!" cried the poor woman, bursting into tears; "it is not such a one as I as can master the will of such a gentleman as he: and if I don't go, another will, and I

hall lose the best place that woman ever had, nd the glory of nursing the young master, retty creature, into the bargain."

"If you do, it will be your own fault," plied Mr. Selcroft, with some severity; "if u knew me a little better, good woman, you ould be quite sure that I should not come re and talk to you in this way, if I were t quite sure that good might be done by it. nd if we can between us prevent this mad heme, trust me, both as a clergyman and child's grandfather, that it is our duty to it. I have little, or I may say no doubt at the life of this dear child would be crificed by the sudden change from one untry to another. It is well known by ysicians that it is very dangerous, and this nsideration ought of itself to be sufficient to duce you to refuse going. Does not your nscience tell you that it must be your duty prevent such a dreadful risk to the child?"

"No doubt, no doubt!" sobbed the poor urse, in terrible distress and perplexity. "If I was but sure, sir," she added, "that master would not take my warning, I'd be as bold

as a lion, and tell him at once that I would not go."

"Be bold, then, and do it at once. Even if your master were wicked and mad enough to run the risk of changing the child's name and country both, and to tell you when you refused to go that he would look out for another to take your place, even then it would still be in your own power to go, or to stay, as you liked best; for you would have nothing to do but confess that, bad as it was to leave your own child and your husband, it would be better to bear that, than to be left behind; and of course he would only be too well pleased to accept your offer of going with him."

"That's true, at any rate," replied the poor woman, "and so I'll take your honour's advice, and say NO outright, if he does really and truly propose such a thing. But I don't, and I won't believe it is possible!" and here the tears began to flow copiously in very decisive contradiction of her hopeful words.

"I wish you may be right, nurse," returned Mr. Selcroft, preparing to take his leave, "for

,t case everything would be as we wish,
ıt any further trouble, only that I shall
myself bound in honour to give you
er sovereign as an atonement for having
you a needless fright." And then he
er, looking very like an April day, with
: in one eye and a smile in the other.

CHAPTER XXII.

Mr. Selcroft retired perfectly well satisfied with his morning's work. He had studied the strongly marked countenance of the handsome young woman who had the honour of filling the place of wet-nurse to the heir of Harley Court, and he had read enough of decided will and resolute purpose there to convince him that she was perfectly capable of becoming in his hands exactly such an agent as he wanted.

He left the nursery with the same quiet, deliberate step that took him there, and perfectly indifferent whether his visit should be known to the family or not. He flattered

which case he was not without hope
a conversation would ensue between
father and nurse, as might lead to
, before they all parted for the night,
possible alteration in the travelling
f the master of the house. In this
as not disappointed. Henry Harley
rom his ride an hour or more before
of dinner. He opened the library
. that also of the morning sitting-
t found both unoccupied. It does
s happen, and in very pleasant country
o, that the ladies find a retreat to
pective apartments very agreeable,
ier earlier than would be absolutely
for the purpose of accomplishing the
ilet; and it is probable that such

nurse that it was his purpose to go abroad towards the latter end of the following week; that his aunt and sister, as well as his little boy, were to accompany him; and that he gave her this early notice of his intentions that she might have time to make all the necessary preparations for the journey, both on her own account and that of the child.

She listened to him with her eyes fixed upon the floor, but that she did not receive the announcement with indifference, was manifested by the suffusion which dyed her face with crimson from the forehead to the chin.

After the pause of a moment she replied, "You be going, sir, to take the young master to foreign parts?"

"Yes, nurse, I am," returned Mr. Harley.

"Well, sir, I am bound to suppose as you know best, as far as he is concerned; but you want to take me in the same bad unwholesome way, far off from my native air, and my husband, and my child. It will go cruel hard with me," and she began whimpering piteously, "it will go cruel hard with me to leave the babe as I love almost as well as my own, but

t it must be, sir, if you are fixed in earnest
on carrying him away, poor little helpless
ng!"

" I am sorry to find that you will not go
h us," replied Henry, quietly. "I must
Dr. Pritchard to look about for another
se for my son. Good night."

And with these words he left her, and
ceeded to his dressing-room, a little dis-
posed at this *contretems*, but probably not
ing as much attention to it as it really
erved.

Nothing was said upon the subject till the
vants had left the room after dinner, and
n Henry mentioned, as a matter in some
t interesting to them all, that his boy's
rse had given him warning, because she did
t like to do anything so unwholesome as
ing abroad.

"Unwholesome!" repeated Lady Frances.
What can have put that into her head?"

"I believe it is a prejudice extremely com-
on among the lower orders," said Mr. Sel-
oft, slightly shrugging his shoulders, "par-
icularly where young children are concerned."

"I do not feel quite certain that it is a prejudice," said Mrs. Selcroft, gravely. "A baby is so very delicate a plant, that there is something very natural in the idea that so violent a change of climate might be injurious."

"In this case, the change of climate will not be very violent," returned Henry, smiling. "I am only going to France, and I believe that in point of climate France is generally considered as having an advantage over England."

"Yet still the *change* might be dangerous," observed Mrs. Selcroft; "all changes are dangerous to infants."

"I am surprised to hear that," said Lady Frances, with rather an incredulous smile, "for I thought change of air was a particularly favourite prescription."

"But from one kingdom to another is not what is generally meant when change of air is prescribed," returned the gentle Mrs. Selcroft, almost in a whisper, to which observation no reply was returned, as it trenched a little upon that particular species of twaddle to which Lady Frances professed antipathy.

And then Fanny gave a new proof that the ecepts of the seemingly forgotten Frederica ll held their influence upon her mind, for rceiving that the delicate colour of Mrs. Sel- oft was heightened by this silence, she said her in a very friendly, confidential sort of ne, shaking her head the while as eagerly as she had been ten times a matron, "But what the world are we to do about the nurse?"

"Of course, my dear Miss Harley, she must bribed to go," replied Mrs. Selcroft, "for a ange *there* might possibly be fatal!"

Fanny was too wise to enter upon any dis- ssion upon such unknown ground, and con- ated herself by saying, "Bribery is a very werful agent, I believe, in most cases."

"Yes," said Henry, in rather a careless cent, as he offered some preserved ginger to s friend Lucy. "I do not anticipate any eat difficulty with Mrs. Nurse."

And here the conversation stopped; or to eak more correctly, changed its course, Mr. lcroft suddenly inquiring, with an air of great terest, whether the report which had reached m relative to the probable translation of the

the drawing-room, Mr. Selcroft
the library instead of accomp
saying, as he passed the maste
"Excuse me for one moment, I
was answered by a silent bow,
seven minutes and a half a
reverend father-in-law entered
room with a volume in his hand
"I hope my coffee is not yet co
rate I have succeeded in findi
wanted, and yet it was pretty n
I have had to climb for it."

And so most assuredly he ha
tured to the very last step
ladder to obtain it. But Mr
still an active man, and the sev
a half had not been all expend

p, he reached the nursery, and greatly atisfaction found the chief of the estab- ıt alone.

time pressed; he had something im- ; to say, but of necessity it must be said , and he thus spoke:—"Your master st told us that you have given him g, and for that I pay you as I promised laying as he spoke two sovereigns upon le. "He told us also that he expected quer your objections to the voyage by you money. Now mark me, whatever e offers to induce you to go, I will if you steadily refuse." And having these words, he waited not for any convinced that on such a subject her eart would be her best counsellor, but ed with as much rapidity as he had , and reached the drawing-room by the oute, seizing upon a volume and ex- g its title too as he went, yet neverthe- had the good fortune to find his coffee cellently hot.

recondite volume was of still further him, for it enabled him to sit down in

a corner and read with extreme diligence, which suited him for two reasons; first, he was out of breath, and secondly, he was too much occupied by his own manœuvrings to wish for conversation with any one; for his scheme was not of a nature to admit of consultation, notwithstanding the excellent terms on which he lived with his family. In truth, his intercourse with his wife was essentially that of command and obedience; and although with Lucy he had often held consultations in which he had found her ready wit and great acuteness very useful to him, he had never made her his confidante in any matter that required any species of moral treachery to bring to perfection. Little social trickeries, by which things might be put in a good light instead of a bad one, she had often assisted in; but he had a sort of instinct that he should lose ground in her estimation if he went farther in disclosing his plotting propensities, and though Lucy's sagacity had, greatly to her own discomfort, led her to perceive that the statements of her dear, darling papa were not always to be depended on, she was still at

immense distance from attributing to him
:h enlarged views on the article of expe-
:ncy, as those by which all the most impor-
ıt events of his life had been governed. In
ort, Mr. Selcroft was at that moment much
:ter pleased to be left to his own meditations
ın to be talked to by any man, woman, or
ld in existence.

It so happened also, that the young father
the important little heir felt less disposed
conversation than for a visit to his nursery,
t fortunately he had decided upon taking his
fee first; if he had not, a very awkward
rt of meeting would probably have taken
ace between the father and grandfather. As
was, however, he found the nursery with no
her occupant than the babe and its nurse.
is was just what he wished, and taking the
tle crowing boy, who already knew him and
elcomed him, in his arms, he sat himself
wn, and opened the important business he
me to discuss, by saying, "Do you really
ink, Mrs. Roberts, that you could find in
ur heart the cruel courage to forsake this

little darling, and let him go away without you?"

"I am sure, sir," she replied, "that if I am driven to do it, my heart will break for it."

"And who will drive you, if it be not yourself, nurse? Six months more, I am told, will be as long as my boy will want you, and if you will consent to accompany him to France for that six months, I will double your present wages."

This offer was so greatly beyond the woman's expectations, that the refusal with which she was prepared faltered on her lips. "Is it possible," thought she, "that the other will give me double the double? I don't believe that he loves the boy well enough to do any such thing." And she had already uttered the words, "Well, sir," preliminary to the obedient "just as you please," which he expected, when a second thought caused her to stop short, and add, "If you please, sir, I'd rather consult my husband before I say either yes or no."

"Quite right, my good woman, quite right," replied her master, rising, and resigning his

:r a parting kiss to her arms. "I will
: another visit to-morrow morning, and
ıd down to your husband directly to
) here that you may consult together
'ou give me your answer."
ıen left the room, perfectly well satis-
h the result of the interview, for he
rudent Will Roberts well enough to
: that he would rather for six months
ht of his good wife, than forfeit the
:red for ever.
: Roberts, however, was less satisfied
r master, for she felt that she had got
ilemma. How could she consult her
upon a question the terms of which
ot be complete until she had again
r. Selcroft, and learned from him
in truth he were ready to double
:e reward which had been offered by
ter? Had she known the Reverend
:roft more thoroughly, or perhaps had
ssessed a more reflective mind, she
ıave felt more at ease, for she would
ticipated what soon happened, almost
'tainty.

No family party in positions equally discordant would be likely to make the interval between the dismissal of the tea-table and the retiring to rest very long. Yet still, as Mr. Selcroft well knew, there must, except in cases of avowed indisposition, be *some* interval, and on this eventful evening he determined to put such interval to good account. The more he reflected the more he felt convinced that if he once suffered his restive son-in-law to make good his departure from England, carrying the only tie which connected them in his train, he might bid adieu for ever to all the advantages of his cleverly-obtained connexion with Harley Court. He had already felt, in more questions than one, that the connexion "did him good," and he was not a man likely to lose an advantage once gained, either by thoughtlessness or neglect of any kind.

No sooner then had he returned his cup to the tea-tray, than closing the volume which he had appeared to search very perseveringly from the first page to the last, he lighted a bed-candle, and saying to his wife as he passed her, "I can't find it," left the room.

Nobody, as it seemed, was inclined to fol-
to assist in any further search which he
ht be inclined to make, and he therefore
in made his way without interruption
ough the library and reached the nursery.
A very few minutes sufficed to finish the
iness which took him there. Having
ertained the amount of the bribe offered
her master to induce her to attend his
d abroad for six months, he immediately
duced the double of that sum and laid it
goodly Bank of England notes before her
ging eyes.

'Persevere in your refusal," said he, "and
s sum is yours. That you may not doubt
good faith I will leave it with you, and
ll only demand restitution in case of your
nging your mind, and giving me reason to
ieve that you mean to leave the country."

The result of this may easily be guessed.
rse Roberts declared, with a great deal of
ling, that the precious babe's grandfather
s a true gentleman, and that, if the dear
be's being carried away from the country
pended upon her going too, his reverence

might be quite easy in his mind, for that, unless she was carried away in chains, nothing should make her go.

On receiving this satisfactory assurance his reverence went to bed, and slept soundly. But his difficulties were not yet over.

When Henry repeated his visit to the nursery on the following day, the nurse, true to her promise, assured him that what he asked was quite impossible, for that neither she nor her husband could abide the notion of her going to foreign parts for any money that could be offered.

The young father was considerably vexed and disappointed; nevertheless, it never occurred either to him, his aunt, or his sister that this *contretems* was a matter of sufficient consequence to make him abandon his purpose of going abroad. On the contrary, they all felt that the only thing to be done was to look out for another nurse with as little delay as possible. The search was speedily successful, and the family apothecary, on being consulted, declared that in his opinion they could not have chosen better; moreover, this ge-

man, whose opinion was of high authority roughout the county, declared that there s no danger whatever likely to ensue from ing the infant from England to France.

All this was highly satisfactory, and the parations for departure went on rapidly. rse Roberts, however, had not yet left the se, the medical gentleman having given it his opinion that it was desirable that the ild's new attendant, who was a very young man, should be instructed by her prede- sor in the daily and hourly routine of nagement which had hitherto succeeded so ll.

The period stipulated by Mr. Selcroft for e conclusion of this farewell visit, was now rived, and the party separated at night with general agreement *not* to meet in the orning, as the early train by which Mr. lcroft desired to depart, on account of an gagement at home, set off too early to ke their meeting again in the morning nvenient to any of them.

Very civil, and with Lucy very affectionate, ieus were exchanged, and the two families

separated with very little chance [illegible] meeting again.

But notwithstanding the abortive result of all his former interviews with Nurse Roberts, the resolute Mr. Selcroft did not leave the house without seeking, and finding, opportunity for one more. He had accompanied his wife and daughter in the interval between tea and coffee to make a farewell visit to the nursery, and though the little boy was fast asleep, Mrs. Roberts scrupled not to lift him from his little bed, that he might receive their kisses and blessings; and very earnest and very tearful kisses and blessings they were.

While this lingering but very natural scene was going on, Mr. Selcroft managed to whisper in the ear of Mrs. Roberts, "get up early to-morrow morning, and let me find you in the shrubbery that leads to the hot-houses."

This invitation having been given in a whisper, was discreetly answered, and accepted, by a silent curtsey. There was indeed small danger that it should be refused, while the dutiful and loving wife of thrifty Will Roberts had the sum already received from the

verend gentleman so freshly in her remem-rance.

Nurse Roberts knew better. She accepted e invitation and kept the appointment.

"Well, Mrs. Nurse," began the gentleman, I dare say you have done your best to keep our place, but you have not done enough, it ems. Yet I can't believe, even now, that y man so fond of a child as your master ems to be of his, would risk the loss of it in e manner he is doing, if he could but be ade to see the danger.

"But how to make him see the danger, sir? hat's the difficulty. He should see the nger soon enough, if I did but know the ay to show it to him," she replied.

"If his new food should not agree with him s well as his former food did," said Mr. Sel-oft, "I think he would be glad enough to ve you back again."

"I think he would, sir," said the woman th a nod, that said much for the certainty of e proposition.

"And you would have made a good thing it, in that case, nurse Roberts, for you uld not only have all the money I have ven you already, but you would keep your ace into the bargain. Not to mention that,

if you really *did* contrive to manage this, I would give you another five pounds out of my own pocket."

"But how *can* I manage it, sir?" returned the woman, looking harassed and helpless, yet feeling her cheeks glow at the same time with the pleasurable excitement of having it hinted that such a thing might be still possible.

Mr. Selcroft looked at her steadily for a moment and laughed. "You will not persuade me, nurse, that you are such a goose as not to know how to manage such a matter as that," said he. "It seems to me quite impossible, that you should not know a great deal better than I can how to contrive it. What could be so easy, for instance, as to give the darling a small dose of medicine, which might very likely really do it good, but if you made fuss enough about its effect, would frighten them all out of their wits, and you would soon see how much longer the new nurse would be likely to stay. But good bye, I can't stay any longer, or I shall be too late."

And with these words he turned away, and re-entered the breakfast-room, extremely well contented with his morning's work, for he felt very sure that his hint would be taken, and also that the consequence would not only be

is friend, nurse Roberts, would be re-
and the family remain at Harley Court,
ıt at the very first symptom of illness in
ld, the young father and the two maiden
would take fright, and that the expe-
l grandmother would be summoned.
l he not been blessed with this hope to
t him, this departure from Harley
would have tried his philosophy very
y, for the privilege of an *entrée* there,
: *of the family*, had been, and still was,
pon which he most prided himself, and
vhich he most delighted to expatiate.
· was he disappointed from the result he
ıticipated from this final interview with
rse. The little boy became poorly, and
ather more poorly still. And then the
ıurse was dismissed, and the old one
d. But the experimental little dose,
repeated, had either been rather stronger
.urse Roberts expected, or the poor babe
:oved weaker, for though restored to his
rse, he continued very poorly still. And
sure enough, the experienced grand-
ıa was summoned, and the Selcroft trio
ıore appeared at Harley Court.
the experienced grandmamma could do
od, nor the skilful doctor either. The

child pined away for a week or two, and died; but not till the most highly celebrated of all baby physicians had most explicitly assured the miserable father that the change of the child's nurse for the two days that it lasted, could not possibly have produced the malady of which he died.

Neither would it be fair to tax nurse Robert's little dose with having any very important share in the melancholy catastrophe. A post mortem examination enabled the two medical men to assure the heart-stricken family that nothing could have much prolonged the infant's life, as organic disease had been evidently born with it.

There was comfort in this, though of a melancholy kind, for poor Henry's heart; for without it he might have carried to the grave the terrible idea that he had lost his child by his own fault. There was comfort in it too, and more than they deserved perhaps, for the disappointed grandfather, and his avaricious agent.

But truth is truth, and it was a clear case that the poor baby would have died if they had never plotted together about him at all.

END OF VOL. II.

SECOND LOVE;

OR,

BEAUTY AND INTELLECT.

A NOVEL.

BY

MRS. TROLLOPE,

AUTHOR OF

"FATHER EUSTACE," "THE LOTTERY OF MARRIAGE,"

"PETTICOAT GOVERNMENT," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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SECOND LOVE;

OR,

BEAUTY AND INTELLECT.

CHAPTER I.

ABOUT a month after the melancholy event occurred, which was recorded in the last chapter, Henry Harley received the following letter from the Baron de Rittesberg:

"No language, Harley, has the power of expressing what my heart feels for you at this moment. An English newspaper has made me acquainted with the death of your child; and it was by the same vehicle, my

ever dear friend, that, some six months ag
I learned the death of your wife. Think n
that I mean to reproach you for not havi
written to me. I have no more doubt th
you love me now, than I had in the happie
moments of our most happy intercourse.
may be that, under similar circumstances,
should not have had sufficient strength
write to you. But I do not write now to t
you that I have an aching heart, because
know that you have it too. I could easil
trust to your guessing that, without my tellin
you of it. I write, dear Henry, to entrea
you to come to me immediately; and I writ
to counsel you, as well as to entreat. Do no
believe that I advise this, merely because my
heart yearns to see you. But I know yo
well; I know, too, that you are strongly a
tached to me, and I believe in my heart tha
you could do nothing more likely to heal th
deep wounds you have received, than to com
to me. Should your charming aunt and sister
be with you, so much the better; they will
both believe that we shall all be delighted to

see them, for they must have perceived a little of the true love and affection we all felt for them. You can either be in our house or out of it, as you best like. We have one of the largest palaces, I believe, in Venice, and there is plenty of room for us all; but if you think you should prefer a mansion of your own, tell us so, and we will seize upon the Doge's palace itself, if none other is to be found large enough to accommodate your party. You must, all of you, 'seriously incline' to listen to a vast variety of travelling adventures, for our eighteen months' wanderings in the East have so crammed us all with new images and new thoughts, that old friends are, I tell you fairly, in some danger of being, what I believe your colloquial idiom calls *bored*. However, we flatter ourselves, that your affection will bear the wear and tear of all the hard work in this line that we shall inflict upon you. Frederica is not with us at this moment, having accompanied a newly married niece of Lord Otway's to Florence for a few weeks, but she will be here again by the

time you reach us, and will joyfully fulfil the promise I make for her, of welcoming her dearest Roman friends with unchanged affection. Do not let me pine for your answer, my dear Harley, and do not forget it, when you dispatch it, that your yea or your nay will make an important item in the pleasures or the pains of your

"Truly affectionate friend,

"CARL RITTERSBERG."

There are many serious, and in their own estimation, sober-minded individuals, who, on witnessing the effect produced by this letter on the miserably depressed spirits of Henry Harley, would have pronounced, without scruple, that its arrival was providential.

And by changing their ground a very little, they would have found firm footing whereon to maintain the truth of the assertion against all comers. For though the verily sober-minded may find it difficult to believe that an especial miracle was wrought for the purpose of conveying the said letter to the hands of

the melancholy master of Harley Court, those who look with a steady eye upon the mysterious transition from desponding sadness to reviving cheerfulness, which we witness around us in all directions, after afflictions that, when they first fell seemed too heavy to bear, those who will steadily watch this, will bless the constant miracle, though they may shrink from asserting that a special one has been performed in their behalf.

"Thank heaven!" said Fanny, to her aunt, the first moment they found themselves tête-à-tête after Henry had communicated this letter to them. "It is the first time since the dear baby died, that I have even for a single moment seen Henry look like himself! Did you remark the altered eye with which he turned first to the one and then to the other of us, as if to see whether the warm-hearted epistle cheered our hearts as much as it had cheered his?"

"Yes, Fanny; and the altered voice too, with which he pronounced the hopeful words, 'Well, what do you say to it?'" replied her

"Thank heaven!" continued Lady Frances. "Something like hope seems returning to us!"

Poor Fanny murmured some deeply-thankful accordance in reply, and Lady Frances rejoined, with the gayest smile that had been seen in the house for months, "What an extremely romantic adventure it would be, Fanny, if it should turn out that you were right, and that I was wrong, respecting the sentiments of a certain young lady whose peculiarities formed so striking a feature in our Roman history."

"On that subject," replied Fanny, colouring, but looking a great deal better pleased than her words expressed, "on that point, Lady Frances, I shall never say a syllable more. When my opinions differ from those of your ladyship, I am not so undutiful as to make a display of them."

"It is delightful to have a niece so thoroughly well-bred and discreet," returned Lady Frances. "And you may depend upon it that such admirable conduct never goes

warded. I will promise on my part to ive you, even if it should prove in the end you were right."

ut notwithstanding Fanny's good breeding discretion the aunt and niece might often been found, had any Asmodeus been ng them, with their heads together, in earnest confabulation on the possible lts of this unexpected summons to Venice. oor Henry had been too severely shaken he death of his dearly cherished child for hing to have power, at once, to restore to the gay and happy tone which befitted ge and character. But it was not difficult those who watched him with so much tionate anxiety as his aunt and sister, to eive that the heavy hopelessness of his ow seemed gradually passing away, like mist of the morning before the noonday

Had they been indiscreet enough to pliment him on his improved looks, it is ly probable that his conscience would have oached him with unnatural levity; but were much too affectionately wise for

this, and were rewarded by seeing him prepare for the expedition, which was very speedily decided upon, with more of his former activity and zeal than they had ever hoped to see in him again.

Yet it is certain that at this time this renewed alacrity of spirit did not arise from any defined or conscious hope in the mind of Henry, that the only woman he had ever really loved might be his. Whenever, since the hour of his terrible departure from Rome, his thoughts had irresistibly turned towards Frederica, it had always been with the painful conviction that he must, in her eyes, have appeared to be one of the most contemptible characters in existence. He could not conceal from his own heart, nor was it possible, as he well knew, that it should be concealed from hers, that during the delightful weeks they had passed together at Rome, the chief object of his life had been to prove to her, by every means short of an explicit declaration, that heart and soul he was devoted to her. Nor could he severely reproach himself for this,

withstanding the fearful disappointment ch had followed it; for assuredly, at that e, there was nothing, save the wish to avoid ing pain to the poor Louisa during what had been taught to consider as her last rs, that ought to have checked either his achment, or the expression of it, for an ur. But though this conviction was suffi- nt to justify him to his own heart, he well ew it could not justify him to hers; for, ugh that last eventful hour which they had sed together in the Colisæum might have ficed to make her understand that she was oved, it might have sufficed also to make comprehend that, notwithstanding his ving been engaged to another, he never l loved that unfortunate other as he then ed her. But could this suffice to convince that the actual circumstances in which he od at the time he made this avowal were h as to justify his making it? How was it sible she could believe this, when all that owed must so irresistibly have convinced of the contrary?

All this was well known, and unceasingly remembered by poor Henry; and if any hope existed within him that he might hereafter be able to make her comprehend the real state of the case, it was so very much at the bottom of his heart, that he almost persuaded himself it would be a folly to look for it.

But, nevertheless, every mile they travelled southward, seemed to improve his health and spirits; and, as if to excuse him in his own eyes for feeling so very much better, both Lady Frances and Fanny Harley had the friendly tact to perceive that it would be advisable that they should improve in health and spirits too; and so they did, assuring each other, and laying it down as an incontrovertible fact for the information of Henry also, that their dear baron was perfectly right in classing the occupation of travelling among the most healthful, as well as the most delightful, in the world.

CHAPTER II.

NICE, at the time that our three travel-
ıtered it, was not approached by a rail-
but by a gondola; and for a few short
nts even Henry seemed to forget that
e was, in comparison with the living gem
:ained, but as the shell of the nut to its
; and to feel, moreover, that the watch-
me after dome, and palace after palace,
om the wave as they glided over it, was
upation to which he was not perfectly in-
nt. Lady Frances, if questioned on the
t, would have been found perfectly ready
lare that she had never yet seen any-

thing that she would be so reluctant to believe she should never see again; and as to Fanny, she was so literally entranced, that it would have been very difficult to bring her to any perfectly sober consciousness that she belonged to earth although not on it.

But this reprieve from personal interest and personal agitation, could not last long, at least not with Fanny and her brother; and though certainly not exactly in the same degree, they had both of them a struggle between hope and fear in their hearts, which placed them in a condition by no means particularly favourable to the speculative enjoyments of sight-seeing.

But with Lady Frances the case was different, for as to fear, she assured herself that she feared nothing, because there was nothing to fear. That their reception by the Rittenberg family would be a very kind one, there could be no doubt after receiving such a letter as the baron had addressed to them. And on the subject of Frederica, she still felt, despite all that Fanny could say to the contrary, that

whatever tender feelings Henry might be fortunate enough to inspire hereafter, he had not left any very profound impression when they last parted; for the young lady's first visit to them, as well as the whole of her conduct since, had firmly convinced her ladyship that it was altogether a mistake to suppose that he had conceived any particular affection for him. She, therefore, enjoyed the little voyage with unmitigated delight, and when their bark touched the steps of the hotel at which it had been finally arranged that they should take up their residence, her only sensation of regret arose from the delay that must intervene before she could again swim in a gondola. The pleasure of Fanny, or at least a considerable portion of it, seemed, for the moment, to wither away as she remembered the immense importance of the next few hours to the happiness of her brother. Should Frederica receive him with the indifference which Lady Frances attributed to her, she was prepared to confess that there could be no very reasonable ground for hope that he would ever succeed in winning

her affections; and, in that case too, all her cherished theories of Frederica's continued affection for herself must also fall to the ground, for it would be no longer possible to interpret the long silence which had so effectually broken up all correspondence between them, to her wish to forget the man whom she had loved too well, and whom it had become a duty to forget.

The pulse of poor Henry did not by any means keep time temperately as he walked up the stairs which led from the Great Canal to the rooms which had been prepared for them; nor were all the glories of the balcony, upon which their drawing-room opened, capable of delaying for a single moment the eager inquiry whether any letter or message awaited them.

The answer to this inquiry was made by the waiters presenting a letter to Henry. It was from the baron, and ran thus:—

"My dear Harley,

"Barring accidents, you must arrive this morning. We shall dine at half-

ast six, and we flatter ourselves that you will ive us time to grasp each dear hand in welome before we are told that the 'soup is erved.' We are to be very near neighbours, nd by the aid of a queer little passage, in all he mysteries of which the waiter of your otel will instruct you, the trouble of stepping n and out of your boat will be spared. We all oin in a cordial ALL HAIL! to your trio, and ntreat you not to keep us longer in suspense han you can help.

"Ever affectionately your friend,

"CARL RITTESBERG."

There is no use in attempting to describe ow Henry felt on receiving this note. He as then within a few steps of the dwelling of rederica, and within two hours of the time ixed for seeing her! He was almost terrified t the vehemence of his own emotion, and the eeling of irritation inspired by the consciousess of his own weakness was its best antiote. "Have I patiently borne so much espair," thought he, "and am I to be so com-

pletely overpowered by one gleam of ho
And where is the gleam?" he murmured
his beating heart seemed to faint within l
"In the fact that her father urges my ret
was the mental answer. "Frederica w
have found some means of preventing th
she really thought I had behaved unworth

The short remaining interval rolled on,
Lady Frances Monkton, her nephew, and
niece, followed the obsequious waiter alon
devious path which led, without the aid
gondola, from the back door of their hot
the back door of the mansion occupied b
family of the Baron Rittesberg.

They had a lofty flight of stairs to n
before they reached the splendid dra
rooms, but they were there at last, the I
and Baroness Rittesberg scarcely permi
them to pass the doors, from their a
eagerness to welcome them within them.

Greatly—tremendously, as poor Harley
preoccupied, it was impossible he coul
insensible to the unmistakeable delight of
baron at seeing him again; nor was he

so wholly engrossed by one idea, as to be insensible himself at once again meeting the friend whose society, despite the disparity of their years, he had enjoyed more keenly than that of any other man he had ever met with. Neither did he fail again to draw the inference which had so greatly comforted him before, namely, that if Frederica had resented his conduct, her father would not thus receive him with open arms.

"But where is Frederica?" said Lady Frances, whose view of the whole affair gave her the courage which her companions wanted. "I trust she is at home?"

"I am happy to tell you she is here," replied Madame Rittesberg, "and that you will see her directly."

And scarcely had she ceased to speak when a side door of the apartment opened and Frederica entered, followed by an old man of peculiarly pleasing and gentlemanlike appearance, and who, though evidently her father's senior by several years, seemed to be attending upon her with very amiable politeness and

attention ; for though he had the incumbrance of a little child upon his left arm, he employed the right, first, in opening the door for her, and next in removing a chair and a footstool that stood in her way and appeared to impede her advance.

That the eyes of our three travellers were too earnestly fixed on her to pay much attention to any one else, will be easily believed. At the first glance they all thought her much changed since they parted. They thought she was taller, and both Lady Frances and Henry would have been ready to declare that she was greatly improved in appearance, and of much more finished loveliness than when they saw her last. If Fanny had pronounced an opinion on the same subject, it would have been different. She, too, would have been ready to allow that she was altered in appearance, but not that it was for the better. To Fanny she appeared much more than two years older, and greatly less brilliant and animated. The trio advanced almost simultaneously to meet her, but the two ladies were in advance of

enry, and to each of them she presented a nd. But the heart of Fanny yearned for a rmer greeting, and forgetting her resolution regulating her own feelings by those dis-ayed by her friend, she uttered the name of Frederica !" and affectionately embraced r.

If it had been Frederica's intention to wel-me her former friend less cordially, she had t the forbearance to persevere in it now, but lding her arms around her, she kissed her on ch cheek, and whispered in a voice of great notion, "Fanny! Dearest Fanny!"

But it was with something like an air of covered dignity, that she then turned to-ards Henry, who, on his part, was doing all at mortal man could do, in order to retain e appearance of well-bred composure. But e too, ventured to present his hand, which rederica, with a prodigiously graceful bow, ndescended to touch with the tips of her oved fingers.

"And now then for a presentation!" ex-aimed the baron, gaily, snatching the babe

from the arms of the old gentleman, who still held it very closely nestled to his breast, adding in a parenthesis, ("Your turn, Otway, shall come next,") "but I positively must have the honour and happiness of presenting my little grandson myself." And with a gaiety of heart which communicated itself to his voice, his eye, and his attitude, the Baron Rittesberg placed the child in the arms of Lady Frances.

Had his knowledge of what was passing in the hearts of his newly-arrived old friends been as perfect as his ignorance in reality was, he could not have made a more judicious selection, for it may be doubted whether poor Henry, or his sister Fanny either, could have safely supported the babe, had it been consigned to either of them.

Fanny's first thought was for her brother.

She could not know what he suffered—that was impossible; but she guessed a part of it, and she gazed at him for a moment with even more terror than compassion.

Men do not often faint, and Henry Harley did not faint now; but there was a ghastly

pallidness of tint on his face that terrified his sister. Yet her terror was not for his health; it could hardly be said that it was for him, in any way. With the quickness of a woman, she saw the whole story developed before her in a moment, and the greatest portion of her fear, lest Henry should betray what he was suffering, was on Frederica's account, rather than on his.

But the not actually fainting was not the only proof of manly firmness which the unfortunate Henry Harley displayed at that moment. He, too, thought more of Frederica than of himself, and with an effort which did him honour, made an attempt, not quite unsuccessfully, to say, "I wish you joy, my dear Rittesberg."

Fortunately, both the baron and his grey-haired son-in-law were much too completely occupied by the child to have perception of anything else; the eyes of the happy Madame de Rittesberg also, were in the same direction, and those of Frederica were most assuredly not turned towards Henry.

This first moment of learning the marriage of Frederica, was, indeed, a very terrible one; but though the agony of it might not be soon over, all outward trace of it passed away with wonderful celerity; and yet not wonderful either, when the character of Henry is understood, and the history of the last eighteen months of his life remembered.

So little capable was he of daring to think that he had any claim upon the constancy of Frederica, even presuming that his own unspoken love had been understood, and that it had touched her heart, that he did not even believe that he could stand acquitted in her eyes of having wantonly endeavoured to appear to her as a disengaged man, when he was in truth bound by the promise which had been ratified so speedily after he had parted from her, by his marriage.

He neither shared in the feeling which had taken possession of Fanny, and which led her to believe, even now, that Frederica had been deeply attached to him; nor in that of Lady Frances, to which her ladyship was equally

constant, that he had been considered by her as a mere temporary acquaintance, with whom she had found pleasure in conversing, because he was gentlemanlike, well-informed, and a great favourite with her father.

From her he differed, by believing that Frederica never would have conversed with the interest and animation she had so often evinced on many occasions which had thrown them together, had she not valued him in some degree for his own sake. He differed from her also, most completely, in the estimate which he formed of the warmth and the constancy of Frederica's affection for her sister. The correspondence by letter having ceased between them, had little or no effect in shaking his faith in this friendship. His interpretation of it was, that Frederica's habits had been formed on those of her father, who never wrote a letter, save for some especial and important purpose.

How much of all this passed through the aching head of poor Henry while he still stood listening to the raptures of the gay grand-

father, may be doubtful, but it was enough to make him decide upon the line of conduct which in his estimation was the most proper for him to pursue. It was courteously and graciously, that he returned the cordial salutation of Lord Otway, who was presented to him by De Rittesberg, as having a multitude of substantial claims to his friendship, besides that of being his son-in-law.

It was moreover evident from Lord Otway's manner, that he had been prepared to esteem and admire Henry, and also that he was well disposed to profit by the opportunity of making so agreeable an acquaintance; for before the strangely agitating evening was over, his sociable, lively, kind-hearted lordship had proposed, at least, half-a-dozen very agreeable schemes which were to throw them together, and enable them to pursue together various antiquarian and artistic researches which he had been evidently given to understand were among the favourite studies of his new acquaintances.

It was difficult to meet, and to treat all

this in such a manner as might ensure the approval of his own judgment after it was over; and the unfortunate Henry, while it was all passing round him, sometimes felt scarcely conscious of what he did, or what he said. He was not, however, altogether without compass, for his wish and will pointed as steadily to one point, as the needle to the pole. That he might neither do nor say anything that might be in any way annoying to Frederica was the only thought, the only motive of which he was conscious, and as Fanny had the good sense, and the great kindness, to declare very early in the evening that she was so overpowered by the fatigue of her long journey, as to render it absolutely necessary for her to go to bed, his first period of penance was a short one.

CHAPTER III.

It may perhaps appear strange t reader that the Harley family should got no tidings of the marriage of Fr during the twelve months which had e since the event took place. But, in there was nothing strange in it. The had first met in the far-away city of salem, and Lord Otway and the Rittesberg having several pursuits in c had soon become intimate. The pur Frederica were always more or less assi to those of her father, and Lord

therefore saw a good deal of her, as well as of her father. Frederica, perhaps, had never been a very young-lady-like young lady, and since her visit to Rome she had become less so than ever. Lord Otway was sixty-five years old, and Frederica was little more than twenty-one, yet, nevertheless, Lord Otway ventured to ask her to marry him, and she accepted the proposal. Lord Otway was in every way not only so good a match, but so good a man, that it was next to impossible that the young lady's parents could object to him if she did not; but yet the baron delayed giving his consent till he had carefully cross-examined his daughter, and received from her the very solemn assurance that she had rather be the wife of Lord Otway than of any man with whom she was acquainted. Her father's first reply to this was given by a doubting look, which was followed by a question: "Does that mean, Frederica," said he, "that your wish is not to be married at all?"

Frederica meditated upon this question for

about a minute, and then replied, "No, father, I do not mean that."

"Then you really wish that I should tell my excellent friend, Lord Otway, that you accept him?" rejoined the baron.

Again there was a momentary pause, which was followed by her saying the single word, "Yes."

"You shall tell him so, yourself, my dear child," he replied; "your doing so will be more agreeable to him, I dare say, and to me also."

The eyes of her father were not fixed on her face at that moment, or he might have remarked a slight movement in the eyebrow that looked a little as if she did not entirely approve his proposal; but if she really felt any objection to it she conquered it very speedily, for she almost immediately replied, "Just as you please, father."

The consequence of which arrangement, of course, was that Lord Otway and Frederica were left tête-à-tête in the drawing-room at the first convenient opportunity. Of course

:a knew very well why this was done,
i probable that this consciousness gave
isagreeable feeling of embarrassment;
did not betray it by her manner,
did she blush when her venerable lover
:d her; on the contrary, indeed, she
:ather paler than usual, and her whole
had much more of dignity than of
ssment.

ing could be better than the style and
of the aged nobleman as he proposed
to her acceptance. He shrank not
'owing his consciousness that it was
)le a young girl of her age could
on a man of his such love as was
asked for in return for such a decla-
is he had made: "I neither ask for
l he, "nor could I truly say that I
· it, for it would be wishing for some-
nonstrous and unnatural. Knowing
I do, Frederica," he added, "I shall
)letely satisfied if you tell me that you
ling to marry me, and *that*, by your
:e and unbiassed will, without being

influenced either by the wishes or commands of your parents."

"Neither my father nor my mother have made any attempt to influence me in this matter," replied Frederica, gently.

"And, nevertheless, you are willing to marry me?" returned Lord Otway, looking earnestly at her.

"Yes, my lord, I am," she replied, "provided your lordship can assure me, after mature reflection, that you think a not very lively young woman, in not very strong health is likely to make a sufficiently gay companion for you."

"I have already reflected very maturely on the subject, Frederica, and I am of opinion that I would much rather be your husband than that of any other woman with whom I am acquainted. But tell me, with the frank confidence which ought to exist between us, have you ever loved?"

The paleness of Frederica gave way for a moment before a burning blush, as she deliberately and distinctly answered, "Yes."

'Is he alive?" demanded Lord Otway, with look and tone that spoke both kindness confidence.

'Yes," replied Frederica.

Were you to remain unmarried, should wish or expect to meet him again?" he.

No," she replied, without faltering. "He arried to another."

I am perfectly satisfied," he rejoined; d I have good hopes that, though the umstances of our union are not quite in ordance with the ordinary scheme for ried happiness, we shall not be a wrangling a miserable pair."

Whereupon he kissed her, and the marriage s celebrated very privately and quietly, in city of Jerusalem, exactly a fortnight after s conversation had taken place.

But this interval, short as it was, was ficient to afford time for the imagining and anging a considerable variety of pleasant ans for the future, to all of which Frederica tened with enough interest to make it

evident that she looked forward to their execution with great satisfaction, but, nevertheless, with so little interference concerning any of the details as to make it evident that she intended to be led and not to lead, and that whatever projects her father and Lord Otway decided upon they would be very certain of meeting no opposition from her.

Once, and once only, in the course of this fortnight, Lord Otway expressed to Baron Rittesberg a fear that none of the various wanderings they proposed had any interest for Frederica; "For if they had," said he, "would she not sometimes suggest some alteration or improvement that would testify that her thoughts were engaged on the same subjects which occupy ours?"

"No, my dear Otway," replied the baron, laughing. "There is no chance of it. But the reason lies not in Frederica's indifference, but in my tyranny. Ever since she was born she has been so accustomed to my plotting and planning, and to her gentle mother's acquiescence therein, that she would as soon

nk of making a civil proposition to the st wind, requesting it to abstain from blow- ; to-morrow, as of proposing to improve any ate that was laid down for her."

And this was true; for Frederica had bounded confidence in her father's talent in anging all such matters for the best.

But this preliminary fortnight did not pass ay without the young baroness's having nd an opportunity of showing that she uld sometimes have a will of her own, and ow how to obtain its object. It was not intention either of her father or her future sband to trouble her by discussing in her sence any of the details respecting the tlement which was to be made upon her; both knew, or thought they knew, that her fidence in them was of a nature to make discussion on the subject quite unneces- y. But Frederica, as it appeared, did not ose to be kept in the dark concerning their entions on this point; for, having sought father in the room appropriated to his rning use, and finding him alone there, she

opened the conversation by saying, abruptly, "Papa! I want you to tell me what settlement Lord Otway proposes to make on me?"

The countenance of her father expressed surprise, but he immediately answered, "The whole of the fortune you will receive from me is to be at your own disposal, and three thousand a-year upon his estate, together with his villa at Richmond as your jointure-house, is settled upon you for life."

"Father!" she replied, while her heightened colour showed she was much in earnest; "Father, I will not marry Lord Otway under such conditions."

"What do you mean, my dear? What is there in the conditions that can displease you?" said the baron, looking as if he were a little disposed to laugh at her attempting to discuss such a theme.

"Listen to me patiently for a few minutes, dear father," she replied, "and I am sure I shall make you understand me. There is no doubt left in your mind, I think, as to my marrying Lord Otway, notwithstanding the

disparity of age between us, because I like him, and because I think that we shall be happy together?"

"None whatever," replied the baron; "I am perfectly convinced that such are your feelings and motives."

"You do me justice, my dear father, as you always do," she rejoined; "but tell me if you think it likely, more than likely,—do you think it is quite sure, for less than that would not satisfy me,—that everybody else will do me the same justice that you do?"

"Very likely not, Frederica; but what does it signify whether those to whose opinion you must be perfectly indifferent, should understand your motives, or misunderstand them?"

"I doubt, papa, if on such a subject I could be quite indifferent to the opinion of anybody. Besides, appearances are against me in this matter, and one might fairly doubt, I think, whether dear, generous Lord Otway himself can understand me quite as thoroughly as you and mamma can do. In short, dear

father, I am quite determined to retract my promise of marrying Lord Otway unless he consents to let the settlement be made after my own fancy. If I did not feel quite sure that I was right, I would not be so imperative, but as it is I cannot be less so, without making myself liable to my own contempt,—and this would be a constant annoyance to me. In the first place, papa, I will not let you put the whole of your property out of your own power. Settle the half of it upon me. I will accept that, if I survive you, but no more. Lord Otway may, if it so please him, convert the villa he has described to us at Richmond into a jointure house, and on me specially he may settle one thousand a year. If he insists upon doing more, he must seek another bride upon whom to bestow his liberality. I do not marry him for the sake of obtaining a large jointure, nor will I leave it possible that I should be suspected of doing so."

The Baron Rittesberg said very little in reply to all this. Perhaps he thought her right. Perhaps he thought she would be rich

ough; in short it was soon made manifest Lord Otway that such were the conditions on which alone he could hope to obtain her nd; and the settlement was made accord-;ly.

The Baron Rittesberg was not very much :prised when he set himself to think about that Frederica in marrying a man more an forty years her senior, should not choose have a large settlement; because certainly was very possible that there might be people se-minded enough to believe that her motive marrying him was to obtain it. And as on as this disagreeable possibility suggested elf, he became almost as anxious to avoid as Frederica herself could be. But, how-:r improbable it may seem, it never struck a as a thing new and strange that his ung and beautiful daughter should wish, m motives of affection, to become the wife his amiable friend, whose greatest defect in own eyes was, that he was ten years older an himself, and therefore less capable of ning him in some of the active, not to say

laborious botanizings in which he still delighted. No! not for a moment had he ever asked himself how it came to pass that the beautiful young girl liked this old gentleman better than all the young ones she had ever seen. The cause of this was precisely the same as the cause of his past blindness to the feelings of Henry Harley towards her, and of hers towards him. Baron Rittesberg's acuteness of observation was ten thousand times more acute for things unseen than for things seen; and the circumstances which passed before his eyes were precisely those concerning which his attention was the most reluctantly awakened. It is possible that the baroness might have seen more clearly, had not her general admiration for her husband rendered her absolutely incapable of believing that he could ever be mistaken about anything.

It would have been well for Frederica, if she too could now have been equally at a loss to comprehend what was passing in her own heart. She knew, and she felt,—and she trembled, and she shuddered, as she knew

and felt it,—that she still loved Henry Harley passionately, faithfully, devotedly. No woman, loving as she loved, can be much in the presence of the beloved, and not become conscious of an answering love, even though the feeling has never been expressed in words. It had, for instance, been quite in vain that the poor enthralled Henry Harley had so carefully abstained, while at Rome, from breathing in words any of the multitudinous emotions that swelled his heart. Frederica Rittesberg knew perfectly well that she was beloved. Long before the memorable interview at the Coliseum, she had been perfectly aware of this; and though it was only then that she learned fully to understand his position, and the motives of his mysterious silence, she had long before become convinced that there was *some* reason for it which only required to be known, in order to be honoured.

And, alas! how well did his moon-lit narrative justify this anticipation! The reveries of poor Frederica during that night may be easily guessed at. There is no need that they

should be repeated. All that it was possible for esteem to add to love seemed added then. How admirable had been his conduct throughout! And how nearly approaching to perfect happiness were the feelings with which she closed her eyes that night!

The events of the following morning have been already related. The effect upon Frederica of the note announcing the departure of Henry, and the cause of it, were lamentably sad, deep, and lasting. Could she have blamed Henry for any part of his conduct, there might have been a better chance of her getting over it; but when any individual, whether male or female, is honestly seeking a radical cure in a love case, the feeling that the party who is to be loved no longer, is more than ever worthy of being loved and esteemed for ever, is a sad impediment!

But so ardent was the wish and the will of the young baroness to act well in this first trial that had ever fallen upon her, that though there was a dreadful struggle in her heart, there was nothing like weakness. Partly,

perhaps, from a fear of self-degradation, but much more from the dread of bringing unhappiness to others, and blame, perhaps, upon the unfortunate Henry, her first great object was to conceal for ever and for ever that she had ever loved him, or that she ever had thought herself beloved in return.

She believed very firmly and very rationally that if this were known, it would bring great unhappiness to her mother, to Lady Frances Monkton, and to her own most fondly loved friend, Fanny Harley. All this was terrible; but in honest truth, it was all as nothing in comparison to the idea of what her father would suffer were HE once awakened to the fact, that the man he loved as a son, as a brother, and as the chosen companion of his heart and his intellect, had destroyed the happiness of his Frederica for ever.

That he had destroyed his own too, by the same unhappy blundering, was not a consideration likely to bring any very soothing consolation to the Baron Rittesberg. The knowledge of this, and a horribly prophetic

sort of feeling of the blight which such sorrow would bring upon the sweet spirit and bright mind of her father, will furnish the key to Frederica's manner of enduring the disappointment which had fallen upon her.

Till she had learned by the papers that Henry was actually married, the great business of her life was to assume the aspect of health and cheerfulness, and to sustain it steadily and uniformaly—a multitude of heroic deeds that "thunder in the index," cost less to those who perform them, than the stedfast perseverance in such a course as this.

The knowing that he was married, was, perhaps, rather a relief than otherwise, for it could only have removed some possible glimmer of uncertainty; everything resembling hope had perished before.

Had the life of Frederica and all her race depended upon the accurate attention with which she contemplated and examined every object of interest during their Eastern travels, it could not have been given more perseveringly; but in spite of this, there were moments

which she felt afraid of herself. She could
t look in the glass without being conscious
at she was growing thin; her appetite was
ne; her sleep was feverish and fitful, and
e lived in almost daily terror lest these
mptoms, despite all her care to conceal
em, might awaken alarm, and perhaps, sug-
st the idea of sending for a physician.

The possibility that such a step might lead
the suggestion, that "the young lady had
mething upon her mind," haunted her like a
ectre, conjured into existence by a guilty
nscience. It would not be very easy to de-
ribe the strangely mixed feelings with which
rederica received Lord Otway's proposal of
arriage. For one short moment repugnance
as the only sensation of which she was con-
ious; but this was almost instantly con-
uered by her indignantly telling herself that
is was merely selfish, and that it would be a
ghtful sin did she permit it to interfere with
e great object of her existence, which was
guard her father from ever suffering any
ortion of the misery which had fallen on
erself.

It may therefore be said, without any exaggeration, that she accepted his proposals joyfully. One reason, perhaps, for this was, that she felt as if new duties would give her new strength. She felt very confident in her own power of making Lord Otway a good wife, and equally confident in her belief that, when she was a wife, it would be more completely impossible for her father ever to guess what she had suffered, than while she remained single.

And so she married.

Under these circumstances she could scarcely be blamed for having suffered Fanny Harley's last letter to her to remain still unanswered.

CHAPTER IV.

ould be false to say that Lady Otway
pang at her heart when she learned from
vspapers that the wife of Henry Harley
more. She did feel a sharp and bitter
neither was she for a moment spared
adful consciousness that it was her own
l deed which had put the seal to her
isery. It would have been utterly un-
had she not felt this, and therefore
d no sin to answer for, even though
:hased each other down her burning
because she had made herself the wife
od man who loved her.

But though we may acquit her, the wretched young woman could not acquit herself. All the kind, sweet-tempered watchfulness of her husband for her comfort, every instance, and they were many, of his thinking in all his plans so greatly more of her than of himself, seemed to plead like angels trumpet-tongued against her.

The news of poor Louisa's death reached her about four months before the birth of her own child, and if the eye of the unfortunate Frederica became less bright, and her delicate cheek more pale, her situation seemed very satisfactorily to account for it. The birth of her precious babe was to her what a similar event must be to all mothers; it seemed, for a time, to engross her so completely as to leave no room in her heart for anything else, and for the first month or two after the event, Frederica looked and felt better than she had done since the memorable night on which she last visited the Colisæum.

But just when she was herself becoming conscious of the improved state of her health,

nd the comparative composure of her feel-
ıgs, another paper fell into their hands con-
ıining a statement of the death of Henry
ouis Harley, only son of Henry Harley, Esq.,
f Harley Court.

This statement would doubtless have caused
er a sigh if it had reached her when she was
lone; it might even have drawn from her
yes a tear of sorrow and of sympathy; but
robably it would have produced no deeper or
orse effect. But unfortunately her father
as with her, and his warm affection for the
ereaved young father was expressed with
uch a burst of tender sympathy, as to make
he heart of the unhappy Lady Otway beat as
f it were bursting from her bosom. She
etained, however, a degree of outward com-
posure that almost made her father angry.

"Is it possible, Frederica," he said, "that you can have so nearly forgotten Henry Harley as to be indifferent to what he must suffer from the death of his only child?"

"Indeed, my dear father, I am not indifferent," replied Lady Otway, "and I wish,

with all my soul, that this sorrow had not fallen upon him."

"He must not remain in England, Frederica," returned the baron. "He must not remain in the house where this sorrow fell upon him,—the house too, where probably his child was born, and where the young mother breathed her last! This is indeed the moment to show that we love him still; he must immediately come to us, Frederica. Your dear, good mother will, I am very sure, contrive to find room in this great rambling palace, even if dear Fanny and her aunt should come with him. Lord Otway will, I know, be delighted with them all; and as for me, it will make me feel a dozen years younger if I get Henry Harley again as a walking, and a talking, and a rowing companion."

And what answer did Lady Otway make to this speech? Did she say, "I think, father, that you had better not?"

Could she say it without giving any reason! Could she say it and give the real one? Both were equally impossible. Both would equally

destroy that happiness, for the preservation of which she had done so much. Her father's eyes were fixed upon her face awaiting her reply; it must be given at once, without any symptom of reluctance or restraint, or the giving it at all would avail her nothing.

"You cannot be more sure than I am, dearest father," she said, "that my mother will contrive to be as able, as we well know she will be willing, to receive your friends. Depend upon it there will be no difficulties there."

"Why do you say MY friends, Frederica? Are they not your friends also, dearest? Will they not be as welcome to Lady Otway as they used to be to Frederica Rittesberg?"

It was with a frightful sort of feverish eagerness that she asked herself, "What am I to do now?" The idea that all she had struggled through that the happiness of her father might be preserved, the idea that the effect of all this might be lost and destroyed in a single moment, if her strength and courage failed her now, enabled her to reply, "Dearest father! how can you put such a question to

me! Of course they are now as ever, my dear and valued friends! And so they will find, you may depend upon it, if they accept your invitation." But after a moment's reflection, she added, "And yet I think, dearest father, that they would be more comfortable, now completely at their ease, I mean, if we did not insist upon their taking up their abode in our wild old palace here. It is quite true that there are a multitude of rooms unoccupied, but I greatly doubt if, with all our efforts, we could succeed in making any of them sufficiently neat and convenient to please Lady Frances."

"Well then, I will give them their choice," replied the baron, gaily, "and whether they are here or at the hotel next door, dear love, we will endeavour to make them remember with pleasure the many happy hours we have already passed together. Poor, dear Harley! He must have suffered greatly, very greatly!"

"Surely that is my little William's voice!" cried Lady Otway, hastily starting up, and hurrying out of the room.

But thus far her self-imposed task had been well performed, for no thought had for a moment crossed the mind of her father that her satisfaction at the anticipated arrival of her English friends was less genuine than his own.

The successful result of her efforts to avoid the dreaded misery of their inhabiting the same house, and becoming members of the same family, has been shown, and when the question was first settled she felt inexpressibly relieved; but, alas! the difference made by this arrangement was either less than she had hoped for, or, at any rate, not sufficient to achieve the object she had in view.

Never, of course, did a day pass, and scarcely an hour, without bringing the two families together, and that in so familiar and thoroughly intimate a manner as to render it nearly impossible for any of them to escape the influence, or to break through the habit of being so.

For the first few days of this most painful and most dangerous re-union, the unhappy

Lady Otway stretched her ingenuity to the very utmost to find or invent excuses for absenting herself from the never-ending, still-beginning parties, that were arranged for showing Lady Frances and Fanny Harley all that was best worth seeing in Venice. But she soon found that this plan did not answer, for the scheme in which she declared it impossible to join one day was invariably put off to another, and something still more domestic, and more closely bringing them all together, was sure to be substituted.

Lady Frances and her niece felt at first that there must be a good deal of awkwardness in this renewal of constant intercourse between persons so situated, but in conversing together on the subject they both agreed that any interference on their part would be in every way objectionable, and, as thorough-born and thorough-bred Englishwomen, they probably saw less danger in it than they might have fancied had their education and habits been continental.

With respect to Henry Harley himself, it

certain that the first renewal of familiar ercourse with Frederica was anything ther than pleasurable, and that if he had nsidered an immediate change of residence in his power, he would gladly have pro-sed it. But he felt that the doing so, under cumstances which so fully justified Baron ttesberg in expecting them to continue his ighbours for a considerable time, must lead entreaties and discussions, if not absolutely explanations, which had much better be oided; and he therefore yielded, without effort, to remaining in the last place in the rld where it was desirable he should be. to Lord Otway, if ever there was a living del of that very charming poetical per-nage, "Auld Robin Gray," it was himself. e history of his attachment and marriage easily given and easily understood. He ed and he loved Baron Rittesberg better an any man he knew, or had ever known; d he admired and approved Frederica more an any woman with whom he had made quaintance during the last thirty-six years

of his life. His first marriage had been contracted about thirty-five years and eleven months before his present visit to Venice, and for thirty-three years he had been the husband of a high-born and *ci-devant* very handsome woman, but who, unfortunately, had never brought him an heir, nor even an heiress.

Had Lord Otway never made the acquaintance of the Rittenberg family, and found in Frederica a young woman so much out of the common way of ordinary young-lady pursuits and pursuits, it is highly probable that, notwithstanding his ardent wish for an heir, he might not at sixty-five have ventured upon a second marriage; but having so recovered his gratitude and devotion to the admirable young woman, who had not only fulfilled the first wish of his heart by making him a father, but had made him the happiest of husbands besides, knew no bounds. He had long ago found out, good man, that his lady was not so sensible to the delicate attentions manifested by the presentation of trinkets, and so forth, as the generality of

ng ladies are supposed to be, and he was
idedly sorry for this, because it deprived
a of so many pleasant opportunities of
ving to her how constantly she occupied
thoughts, and how greatly he delighted in
ing her pleasure. But Frederica, notwith-
nding the load of secret sorrow at her
rt, was easily taught to understand and
value the affectionate temper of the
iable old man to whom she had united
rself, and, unhappily, a multitude of bloom-
brides might be found who, having mar-
d in a fervid fit of tender passion one year,
ve been left before the conclusion of the
t with less than the hundredth part of
affection which Lady Otway felt for her
sband.

Those well-known simple words in the old
lad above alluded to—

"Auld Robin Gray is very kind to me,"

scribe more completely the impression his
nduct had produced on her mind than the

most laboured description of her feelings could possibly convey.

And such was her state of mind when the news of Henry Harley's widowhood reached her.

The blow was a very awful one; but whoever suspects Lady Otway of sinking under it in such a manner as might in any way interfere with the duties she had taken upon herself, either as a wife or a mother, does her great injustice.

Could Lord Otway have been made acquainted with the whole of her past history and her present feelings, it is impossible he could have been otherwise than satisfied at the admirable tone of mind to which she brought herself after the struggle of a few feverish days. And happy, most happy would it have been for her had it occurred to her that the best thing she could do would be to put this excellent friend in possession of every secret of her heart! He would have guarded her faithfully through all her difficulties, and protected her from every danger. But in the

nult of her feelings at first learning this
ws, and in the moment, if possible more
rible still, which made her aware that they
re likely to meet again, she was not suffi-
ntly in possession of her calm reason for
ch an idea to occur to her. Had it been
herwise, had she unreservedly explained all
r feelings and all her fears to that kind-
arted friend, a vast deal of misery would
re been spared to them both.

CHAPTER V.

Of all the difficulties which beset the unhappy Lady Otway at this time, the keeping her father in continued, in eternal ignorance of her former sentiments and her former hopes respecting Henry, was that which haunted her most perpetually. Her success or failure in this seemed to her imagination to constitute all that her destiny had left her of good or evil in this life.

She had watched with so much pleasure, during the bright days that were gone for ever, the extreme delight which these two best-beloved of human beings had felt in the

iendship and society of each other, that the ea of seeing it blighted and overthrown by r, produced a sensation of misery which olutely overthrew her judgment, and robbed r of all the gentle, womanly patience which d hitherto made so beautiful a feature in r character. Rather than this, she would o anything and brave anything. And she on decided that the only way to guard ainst this dreaded grief was so to act as to ake everything go on precisely as it would ve done if no feelings had ever existed tween herself and Henry but such as were own to her father.

"It may be difficult, and it must be dread- l to enter upon and carry on such a system f deceit, but it will be possible; I am quite re it will be possible!" thought she, as she y through the sleepless hours of the night which this desperate resolution was decided on; and then, as if still farther to strengthen the idea occurred to her that, beyond the ily exertion which would be required of her sustain the part she meant to act, no

objection whatever could be made to the pl
save one—and that one consisted in
danger to her own peace and, perhaps, to
of poor Henry, also, from the constant
familiar intercourse which it would be
to lead to between them.

In the darkness and silence of night
burning blush dyed the cheek of Freder
this idea suggested itself, and it was wi
feeling of deep and indignant self-cont
that she rejected it.

"What is there that another could accu
me of," thought she, "by which I could pretend
to feel offended, when I am ready to suspect
myself of such degrading weakness? No,
Harley, I am conscious of no cause for self-
reproach in recalling any feeling that you
inspired formerly, nor do I fear it now. I
must play a hateful part—I must play the
hypocrite! I must seem gay, light-hearted,
and happy, when the real honest spirit within
me is in sackcloth and ashes! But I would do
more than this to save my father a pang
—and from doing this I will not shrink,

o, not if the effort leads me to the rave."

A resolution so taken, and by such a woman, as not likely to be broken; and it was cer-inly the more easily kept, because it imme-ately led to results which seemed in accord-ice with the wishes of the whole party. And us it appeared, both to Baron Rittesberg and ord Otway, that the health of their beloved rederica was very decidedly improved by the rival of her English friends, for whereas she d before their coming shown herself so little sposed for active exertion of any kind, as ten to make them fear that she was not well, e was now perpetually proposing some new lan of amusement.

"I used to think," said Lord Otway, "that should have to take her away from my vourite Venice, without her having seen one alf the treasures it contained; but now, dear reature, she seems determined upon preparing erself for the fabrication of a guide-book that hall rival Murray's."

"It is indeed delightful to see her like her-

self again. It is the first time since your boy was born, my lord, that I have thought his mother really well," said the baron.

"I have no doubt," rejoined Lord Ow[illegible] "that her charming young friend, Fanny [illegible]ley, is an excellent physician, as well as a very pretty girl, and that she has been privately administering restoratives which have produced this charming increase of activity in my fair wife, for the which good service I feel that I owe her an immense debt of gratitude."

And what did Frederica's mother say? She gave it as her decided opinion, and spoke moreover, with a tone of great confidence, that nothing could have been more opportune and fortunate than this return of Lady Frances Monkton, and her nephew and niece, to Italy. "Frederica," she said, "like a great many other young mothers, was likely to get so completely occupied and engrossed by her new-born babe, as to be in great danger of growing indifferent to everything else, and that this lucky arrival would give her the best possible chance of escaping such deplorable folly."

Lady Frances Monkton likewise, was by no means slow to perceive that the appearance of illness and low spirits which she had remarked in Lady Otway when they first arrived, was no longer visible. She was certainly looking much better in health, but this she was ready to allow might be occasioned by her not having entirely recovered from her confinement when they first saw her; but for the equally evident improvement in her spirits, "she could only," she said, "account by supposing that the renewal of her acquaintance with Henry was the cause of it."

The judgment passed upon her by Fanny was very different, and never in the course of their joint lives had the aunt felt so much inclined to quarrel with her niece, as when she discovered that Frederica, far from having lost ground in the estimation of Fanny by this remarkable transition from melancholy to cheerfulness, was spoken of and treated by her as the most admirable of human beings.

"Had you lived a little longer abroad, Miss Fanny, long enough, I mean, to familiarize

you with the continental fashion of preferring the society of every man you meet to that of your husband, I might perhaps find or make some sort of excuse for you; but as it is, your feelings and opinions respecting the conduct of Lady Otway, are to me a most complete enigma."

"They would not be so, Aunt Frances," replied Fanny, reproachfully, "if from the time of Henry's departure from Rome I could have induced you to judge Frederica fairly. But you have never done so. You accused her then, of being light and unfeeling, because she exerted all her strength and all her ingenuity to prevent our perceiving that the sudden departure of my brother, and the unexpected errand upon which he was gone, had blighted her hopes, and rendered her miserable. And yet, Lady Frances, had her conduct been exactly the reverse of what it was, had she paraded her disappointment before our eyes, and those of her father and mother, what would you have said of her, then?"

"You have made out a capital good case,

Fanny," replied her aunt, laughing; "but before it can produce the effect you intend, you must prove that this presumed tender attachment on her part, was something more than mere coquetry and a genuine love of flirtation and admiration, and having no more to do with affection than with astronomy. Her behaviour after the departure of Henry, was perfectly intelligible upon my theory, but positively monstrous on yours. And now again, Fanny, it is really not easy to conceive anything much more absurd than your interpretation of all we have heard, and all we have seen here."

"I do not see where the absurdity lies, Aunt Frances," replied Fanny, gravely, "nor will I ask you to explain yourself, for the more we talk on the subject, the less we seem to understand each other."

"Nay, my dear, I assure you that I have no particular wish to talk on the subject; quite as little as you can have, I imagine," replied her ladyship, a little scornfully; "but yet it would be rather amusing, too, I think, to hear you

explain why it is that such a pattern wife as you of course consider Lady Otway to be, should so readily lend herself to every project, and every party, which is proposed, and which can by possibility lead her into the society of a man whom she has reason to believe is passionately in love with her, and with whom, if your Roman theories were correct, she was herself passionately in love not quite eighteen months ago."

"You told me just now, Lady Frances," replied Fanny, colouring, "that I had made out a strong case; I may now return the compliment, and if we are the aunt and niece we used to be, we shall neither of us draw the unkind inference that the other wishes in any degree to falsify facts, or even to give them an unfair colouring. The difference of opinion between us, arises, I believe, from the different degrees of familiarity which has existed in our intercourse with Lady Otway. Not that I mean to say or insinuate that she has ever, either here or at Rome, uttered one syllable of such confidential communication to me as

ould justify me in saying that I know I am ght and that you are wrong. Nothing of ne kind has ever passed between us. Never-heless, I very decidedly think that I know er better than you do; and it is this convic-ion, Aunt Frances, which prevents my adopt-ing your opinions on this subject as readily as I do on most others."

"Well, well, my dear," returned her lady-ship, rather testily; "there is evidently no good to be hoped from our discussing the sub-ect any farther. However blundering I may hink you in your judgment of another, I have not the slightest fear of your committing any ndiscretions yourself; and I therefore do not eel called upon to give myself any farther rouble, nor have I the least intention of alluding to it again. There is a vast deal to amuse one in Venice without having recourse o espionage into the private flirtations going on in all the solemn-looking gondolas which loat around us. And moreover, I do not presume that we are to make a part of the Baron Rittesberg's suite for ever. We shall

move on some day, I dare say, and then I hope all this folly, to say the least of it, will be forgotten."

And having spoken these words, her ladyship rather hastily deposited her knitting-needles, and the pretty purse she had been so diligently employed in finishing, in her work-box, turned the key of it with a very audible snap, and left the room.

Fanny was vexed, greatly vexed. She saw that her aunt, notwithstanding all her professions of indifference on the subject, had conceived a very strong prejudice against Lady Otway, a conviction which was more thoroughly brought home to her by the little exhibition of temper which she had just manifested, than it could have been by any more deliberate display of disapprobation; for Lady Frances was a very well-behaved, lady-like personage, and would *not* have snapped the key of her work-box, had she not been rather too much excited to know what she was about.

And as this had been the case once, might it not be the case again? Might not the feel-

ing be exhibited before others, as well as before herself? And if it were, if Henry for instance, should for a moment believe that Lady Frances Monkton suspected Lady Otway of light or improper conduct, what would become of the affectionate family union which had hitherto constituted so much of their happiness?

She knew, with very perfect certainty, that he would not endure it; although no word of confidence had ever been exchanged between them on the subject of Frederica. The situation of poor Fanny was indeed a very singular and a very embarrassing one. Her deep-seated conviction that this friend, whose character it had been for months her delight to study, was as high in principle, and as pure-hearted in intention as it was possible for a human being to be, could not be shaken.

Nor had she, in truth, ever mistaken her. Fanny was quite right in believing that till Frederica Rittesberg had known Henry Harley, she had never known what it was to love, nor had even fancied that she had; and Fanny was equally right in thinking that, before her

friend and her brother had been personally acquainted for many days, they had both become devotedly and passionately attached to each other.

Fanny had guessed too, with very keen feminine acumen, that Henry had not disclosed to Frederica the circumstances of his recent engagement; a reserve easily understood by one as thoroughly well-acquainted with his sensitive and honourable character, as she was.

The only fact of any importance which her affectionate watchfulness did not discover, was the all but perfect explanation which had taken place between them during their moonlit visit to the Colisæum.

In judging Frederica's conduct after his departure, she was at first more puzzled; but ended by being equally certain, and equally right. She marked the sort of careful cheerfulness with which she laboured, and very successfully, to conceal from her father and mother the fearful misery which had fallen upon her, and in her conduct to Lady Frances and her-

self, Fanny saw only the rational and perfectly consistent system of concealment by which she was determined to hide for ever the weakness into which her heart had betrayed her.

That she should herself have married after learning the marriage of Henry, was, she thought only a part of the same system, and the age and character of the man she had selected, and the circumstance of his being strongly attached to her father, rendered this interpretation still more obvious. Neither had the constant-hearted Fanny seen anything in the conduct of her friend since their arrival at Venice, suggestive of anything approaching to suspicion against her honour. She felt that her situation was one of extreme difficulty, and that it would clearly be impossible for her to treat Henry with anything like reserve, without calling her father's attention to the change, in a manner that might frustrate all her past endeavours to preserve a secret, the knowledge of which would so infallibly make him miserable; and satisfied with this reasoning, the

utmost severity of Fanny's judgment against the ceaseless intercourse between the two families, only went the length during the first week or two after their arrival, of wishing very heartily that they were again separated.

CHAPTER VI.

REDERICA meanwhile might, without a me-
or, be said to be so completely borne aloft
ıe high-minded purity of intention which
ıted everything she did, as to render her
able of seeing any of the snake-like little
ıiefs which lay concealed in the flowery
on which she had entered. The affec-
between her and her father was of no
ary nature, for in addition to all that
ee of tenderest and best in the union of
rs and daughters who are excellent in an
ary way, there was an additional tie
between them, arising from the always

amiable, but often puzzling eccentricities of the baron, which Frederica well knew that nobody understood so well as herself. In the very earliest period of her acquaintance with Henry Harley at Rome, she had from the first been amused and interested by the genuine sympathy of the attachment which had united two men, so widely different in age, in a friendship of such brotherly equality.

And then, as her own sentiments for Henry gradually assumed a character which had less to do with her father's feelings, and more with her own, the pleasure she derived from this became greater still. The delight which she felt in discovering that the first man whose admiration had ever given her pleasure, was also the only one with whom she had ever seen her father appear to feel that he might venture to pour forth the deep, bold, and original speculations which were so essentially a part of himself, and that without any risk of being misjudged or misunderstood, was the most delightful emotion she had ever enjoyed.

The pleasure which the baron so evidently
ok in this new companionship seemed, as it
re, to sanction her own, and all the shy
barrassment of a young girl's first pre-
ence, was completely overpowered by the
tainty that this preference was shared by
r father.

When the cruel stroke fell upon her which
once quenched all her young hopes, and
stroyed for ever the delightful sort of exist-
ce which she had enjoyed in common with
n, her regret seemed almost as much for the
ron as for herself; yet she dared not name
e subject, lest she might betray emotions of
ich he had not the slightest suspicion, and
e air of indifference, therefore, which she
d assumed, and which had so grievously
fended Lady Frances, was the result of a
ost earnest resolution on her own part, that
r father's grief for the loss of his favourite
mpanion and friend should not be rendered
ore bitter still, by any suspicion of what that
ss had been to her.

In this, at least, she had succeeded per-

fectly, and the certainty of this success was decidedly her best consolation. But it was grievous, very grievous to her to see how, as she expressed it to herself, the brightness of her father's mind seemed faded in the absence of the friend whose converse he had so greatly enjoyed; and the more she remarked this, the more she seemed to become conscious that she had herself no longer the power of being the companion to him which she had been formerly.

Not all the exciting novelty of their Eastern travels could, in fact, restore to either of them the feeling of happiness which the society of Henry had given them.

And this was the state of things when they first fell in with Lord Otway. His long and familiar knowledge of the interesting antiquities of the country through which they were travelling made him an agreeable, and often a really valuable companion; and his joyous, yet gentle temper speedily endeared him to the whole party. The result of this has been already recounted, nor did it take

ng to bring it about. To Frederica's feel-
gs it seemed a righteous deed to accept his
fered hand, because the doing so separated
er still more and more from one whom she
lmost felt it a sin to remember; a feeling
hich she had already shown was very strong
ithin her, when she suffered her ever-dear
anny's last letter to remain unanswered.

And then, as we know, a great and real
essing came to her, in the birth of her child,
d it was a blessing to her father and her
other too, while to her amiable husband it
emed like a positive renewal of life.

And certainly at this time Frederica
came more reconciled to her destiny than
e had ever hoped to be. Perhaps during
er most wretched moments the misery she
ad dreaded most was that of making those
nhappy, who had hitherto looked to her as
e source of all their brightest joys, and
ow this dreaded sorrow seemed effectually
emoved.

And this, again, was the state of things
hen they accidentally learnt, considerably

after the first event had occurred, that Henry Harley had lost his wife, and subsequently that the child she had left him had followed her to her early grave.

It is useless to recapitulate the effect of the tremendous shock which the first of these events produced on Frederica; but the dreaded meeting which had been the consequence of the last now seemed likely to involve the unfortunate Lady Otway in greater suffering still.

It must not be supposed that either Baron Rittesberg or his daughter ever deluded themselves into the belief that, in the well-informed, gentlemanlike, and truly amiable Lord Otway, they had found a second Henry Harley, or that any mental companionship of the quality which they had enjoyed with him, could ever be hoped for again. It was, therefore, with a strangely mixed sensation between pleasure and pain that Frederica watched the renewed effect of Henry's society upon her father, when the first agitation of their meeting had passed away, and they found them-

elves once again settling down into their former ways, and their early habits of discussion.

But as the painful part of all this belonged wholly to herself, and the pleasurable part to her father, it would have been easy enough for any one acquainted with the circumstances and the personages, to foresee which would be the feeling nurtured and encouraged, and which would be treated as an inevitable evil, that must be borne without notice or resistance.

This was a very dangerous theory, and the more so because it became absolutely necessary for Lady Otway, in order to produce all the enjoyment which she intended her father should find in this unexpected restoration of his favourite companion, that she should herself, at least occasionally, be in their society and join in conversations which were not unfrequently the sequels of discussions commenced at Rome.

It would be difficult to fix on the precise time when this resignation of herself to cir-

cumstances ceased to be painful; and perhaps equally so to say precisely when they unhappily became too decidedly the reverse. Certain it is that both these changes took place without Lady Otway herself being in any degree aware of it.

So completely had it become the habit of her life to do all she could for promoting the pleasure of others, without in any degree considering her own, that she only pursued the same system when she either accepted or suggested all sorts of parties and schemes for bringing the two families together. And how was it possible for her to do otherwise when the enjoyment of so many appeared to be the consequence of it?

Her father, who with all his sincere attachment to Lord Otway, never dreamed of making him the repository of any of his queer, original thoughts, seemed vivified in the most remarkable manner by the mere accident of having Henry Harley sitting next to him. Her excellent mother, whose character might be likened to a mirror, reflecting whatever was

und her, and the brightest tints the most
urly, seemed positively restored to youth
l beauty by the radiant enjoyment of the
on. Lord Otway was still a kind and
tle Auld Robin Gray, with the delightful
iety of being the father of a son and heir.
And Henry himself, the childless widower?
uld it be other than a very righteous
asure to see him what he now was to her
ner, instead of his remaining the same pale
l almost silent mourner which he had
peared at his first arrival?

The Lady Frances Monkton had never,
haps, very closely touched the heart of
derica Rittesberg, nor was Lady Otway
ticularly mindful of her now. However,
was to be presumed that her ladyship was
used, inasmuch as every object most worthy
attention in the once glorious and ever
utiful city of Venice was brought before
eyes in the most advantageous manner,
y after day, in judicious succession, and in
t she was amused.

And Fanny? The dear, ever dear, though

long neglected Fanny? Was Lady Otway quite, quite satisfied by the effect produced on her spirits by their reunion?

Frederica could have neither answered no nor yes to this. To her, Fanny's manner was tender, affectionate, and caressing, as it had ever been; but somehow or other she certainly did not appear to be in good spirits. There were, however, as Lady Otway might naturally think, many reasons to account for this without attributing it to any circumstances now passing round her. Might she not still be mourning in heart and spirit for the loss of her brother's only child? Might she not have loved it almost as well as she herself loved her darling little William? And if so, was it not perfectly natural that the very sight of that dear treasure might painfully recall what they had lost?

So much persuaded was Frederica that this was the case that she often denied herself the dear delight of holding her baby in her arms while conversing with her friend, and never, during all their affectionate intercourse of

, had Frederica shown so much tender
so much flattering attention to Fanny as
lid now. Nor was the charm of this
ed intimacy in any degree lost on
y ; on the contrary, it was with a loving
g, that warmed her heart very delight-
that she perceived and felt how perfectly
she had been in believing that the
ict of this beloved friend towards herself
never been caused by any capricious
g-off of affection, but by some other
e which, be it what it would, Fanny
leeply convinced would only do Frederica
ur if rightly understood. But with all
it was, nevertheless, perfectly certain that
y Harley was not in good spirits. She
ied herself, like the rest, in looking at
thing that was best worth seeing in
ce, and was as much alive as ever to the
ure of frequently having the baron for
personal escort ; but the light-hearted
y which had formerly procured for her
greatly valued distinction was far from
as genuine as heretofore.

And whence arose this change in Fanny Harley? She really seemed, at that particular time, to be in possession of all the materials of enjoyment that she prized most highly. She was in a delicious climate, where bright days succeeded each other so surely as to mix no fears of the morrow with the pleasures of to-day. She was precisely on that spot of earth where she had the most frequently wished to find herself; all that she most loved and best appreciated in art was constantly within her reach; the friend she best loved was her almost constant companion, and the brother whom she loved even better still was almost always with her. And yet with all this Fanny Harley felt more anxious and more unhappy than she had ever before done in the whole course of her life.

The cause of this, though carefully and effectually hid from all the world beside, was not hid from herself. She knew very well, poor girl, that she was miserable, and miserable on account of her brother. That brother whom she had watched through life, not only

as the most beloved, but, as the most nearly faultless of human beings, now appeared to her to be entering upon a course which must be equally fatal to his honour and his happiness. Nor was it only *his* honour and *his* happiness for which she trembled; she saw, or fancied she saw, that those of her unhappy friend were endangered too.

Most rightly had she interpreted the motives which had led Lady Otway, after the first terrible moments of meeting were past, to resume with her brother as nearly as possible the same tone of manners and familiarity of intercourse which had existed between them during the happy days of their acquaintance at Rome; and most rightly did she interpret *now* the frequent blush, the momentary embarrassment, and the often absent air of the unhappy Frederica, while still retaining and even increasing the tone of sisterly intimacy which she had adopted towards Henry.

But still more did the manner of Henry himself alarm her. Had she known him less

well, had she been less accustomed from his very earliest childhood to be the recipient of all his thoughts and wishes, she would have been less struck by his manner now. It was very evident to Fanny that he carefully avoided all tête-à-tête communication with her. Kind, attentive, observant as ever, he continued both to herself and her aunt. But these frequent little chit-chat moments, sometimes caught by chance and sometimes by design, in which the brother and sister were wont to utter everything that they might not wish to utter to any one else, all such moments seemed passed and gone for ever.

And then, poor Fanny saw, if nobody else did, the sympathy which seemed to exist between an awkward moment of silence on the part of Henry and an awkward moment of silence on the part of Frederica. The temper of both, too, seemed fitful and capricious; sometimes almost childish in gaiety, and sometimes almost gloomy in gravity.

Yet never for a moment did Fanny suspect her friend of any real, or rather of any con-

scious dereliction of duty. She feared much less for her conduct than for her peace; and when she contemplated the lamentable contrast in age and appearance between Lord Otway and his wife, and remembered how exactly the reverse her observations used to be, when watching with such exceeding pleasure the evident and mutual admiration of her friend and her brother at Rome, she could not avoid a feeling of terrible anxiety lest what she remembered so well might be remembered still better by themselves.

CHAPTER VII.

But neither the fears nor the sufferings of Fanny were, as it seemed, in any degree shared by her brother. The unexpected discovery of Frederica's marriage had, for a few hours, thrown him into a state that very nearly approached to frenzy. But the very vehemence of his emotions tended to shorten their duration; and so, also, did the very obvious fact which by degrees suggested itself, that, however his conduct might have appeared to her, there existed no cause whatever for his blaming her; and as he remembered this, and as all feeling of anger and irritation

ɜed away, the character of his grief ɑged too; he no longer gave way to the l feeling of despair which he fancied, ing a few terrible moments, had destroyed reason, but he often walked his room ing the darkness of night, his arms folded oss his breast, and tears of tender sorrow, h for her and for himself, streaming from eyes.

Had Frederica married a young instead of old man, it is very possible that this tler frame of mind might not have come ɔn him so speedily; but as it was, he ɑd inexpressible relief from it, and from ɪking that, however hopeless and miserable future life was doomed to be, he was at ɜt spared from the misery of believing that heart which he had thought to be his ɪ was transferred to another.

Nor did he again relapse into the deplor- ɜ condition to which the first shock had ught him; he was, indeed, no longer the ɑry Harley of Glengarif, or the Pyrenees, Rome, or Harley Court, but if more medi-

tative he was not less amiable, and though Fanny might be of a different opinion, his ever partial and admiring friend, the baron, thought any change he found in him might be easily accounted for by the loss of his wife and of his child.

And what did Frederica think? How did she reason upon what he was and what he had been? Frederica did not blunder much in facts past, though she did a little as to the facts they were likely to produce. Every syllable of the narrative he had breathed into her ear at the Colisæum remained engraven on her memory, and she was as thoroughly convinced that he had loved her, and had hoped to make her his wife as soon as the young girl whom he had been taught to believe dying was no more, as she was that she was now the wife of Lord Otway.

Neither did she in any degree blame him for what had happened afterwards, any more than she blamed herself for having married Lord Otway. They had both believed themselves to be doing right, and were both

deserving of pity, and not of blame, for having, while so acting, destroyed all their hopes of earthly happiness.

That her father had been spared the knowledge of this was the only circumstance upon which her mind rested with complete satisfaction, and it is no wonder, therefore, that she sought by every means in her power to preserve him in this happy state of ignorance.

Anything like coldness or avoidance on her part towards Harley could not fail of being observed, and, if observed, could not fail of bringing on the explanation which she so greatly wished to avoid.

And in this way the intercourse between them, instead of lessening, increased; for the kind-hearted Lord Otway liked nothing so much as to have a party of intimate friends constantly round him, before whom he might talk without restraint when he was awake, and in whose presence he might indulge himself in going to sleep, whenever the fancy to do so seized upon him, and who could, more-

over, give him the satisfaction of knowing that by doing so he should not leave his dear wife without a companion to talk to.

While things were precisely in this state the only person who could really be said to suffer under their influence was Fanny. It would be untrue to say that Henry was unhappy, since every passing day, and pretty nearly every passing hour, found him near Frederica, and in the enjoyment of much more freedom of intercourse with her than he had ever enjoyed during their happiest days at Rome.

Whether his hopes took him further still, whether the age of Lord Otway suggested the idea that the perfect happiness he once hoped for, was only delayed, not lost, it would be difficult to say. But even if this were the case, the hope, if such it might be called, was vague and distant, and his thoughts were much more earnestly directed to the making her present existence better than he had found it, than to any more distant dreams for the future.

He knew and felt, however, that this present existence could not be happy, and he accused himself of being the cause of it.

He might have been said to pity, as tenderly as he loved her, and most surely a large portion of the ceaseless meditations which he bestowed on her, were occupied on plans and projects for embellishing a life that he had done so much to render unhappy, without the mixture of any selfish object, unless the pleasure of seeing her cheerful might be called so.

Had he asked himself at this time whether the life he was leading was a happy one, he would indignantly have answered NO, yet he would probably have been very unwilling to change it for any other. But it was far otherwise with poor Fanny. With all her confidence in the principles both of her brother and Lady Otway, she could not be insensible to the fact, that there was danger to both in the frequency and unrestrained freedom of their intercourse; and though Lady Frances persevered in her resolution of never again

alluding to the subject, her niece knew her too well not to perceive that this silence indicated no change of opinion on the subject.

It was impossible that this state of things could last long; it was impossible that so high-minded and right-thinking a person as Fanny Harley could long continue to witness the constantly increasing devotion of every moment of her brother's life to a married woman, and that too in defiance of her aunt's decided and avowed opinion of its impropriety, without feeling that she was giving her sanction to what she knew to be wrong. Her firm and perfectly unshaken faith in the high principles, and rigorously right intentions of Lady Otway, was far from lessening her scruples as to the propriety of leading her to think that, because she meant to do right, it was impossible that anything she should do could be wrong; and yet such an inference, or something very like it, might easily be drawn from the tacit sanction which her presence gave to all that she now saw. Lady Frances, meanwhile, had in some degree withdrawn herself

such responsibility, by gradually becom-
o exclusively the companion of Madame
ittesberg, and the sharer of her retire-
which delicate health had long made
sary to her, that she no longer appeared
now anything concerning the engage-
s and arrangements of the rest of the
.

at poor Fanny, therefore, should feel ill
se was natural enough; and so much did
ainful feeling increase upon her, that she
ngth determined to speak openly to her
er on the subject. The most malicious
tes could scarcely have assigned her any
which would have been equally repugnant
r feelings.
e never remembered to have lectured
y during the whole course of her life;
yet the lecturing him was far from being
vorst part of the business—for must she
eem to throw some blame, some injurious
tation upon Frederica? And she shrunk
doing this, both because she believed in
eart that she did not deserve it, and be-

cause she felt an almost cowardly dread of the indignation which any such imputation would excite in her brother.

But in spite of all this, she courageously resolved upon taking this step, which was in truth all that she could now do, to check the misery which seemed in her opinion to threaten them all.

Henry was in the habit of sitting for the hour or two which intervened between his early breakfast, and his first visit to the Rittesberg palazzo, in a small room at the hotel, which Fanny had dignified with the name of his study. At the door of this room she knocked when she knew that he was there, and alone, and on being bid to enter, she opened the door, and presented so desperately pale a face to the eyes of her brother, that he started up in considerable alarm, exclaiming, "Good Heavens, Fanny! what is the matter? What makes you look so dreadfully pale?"

"Nothing, nothing, Henry," she replied, "at least, I have no bodily ailment which

makes me look pale;" and certainly at that moment Fanny Harley was rather glad that she did look pale, as his observation assisted her in the difficult task of explaining the motive of her visit.

"If I look pale, Henry, it is because I have something unpleasant to say to you," she resumed; "but I will not, I cannot believe, my dearest Henry, that you will permit yourself to be angry with me, even if what I have got to say, should be as painful to you as to me."

Did the conscious heart of the young man at once suggest to him the nature of the lecture which he was certain he was going to receive? Probably it was so, for he became as red as his poor sister was pale, and replied in a quiet, ceremonious sort of tone, exceedingly unlike that in which he usually addressed her; "And I will not, and cannot believe, my dearest Fanny, that you will permit yourself to say anything that ought to make me angry."

"Indeed, I will not!" she replied, while the

earnestness of her good intentions brought tears to her eyes. "But, nevertheless, it is painful! You know how I love you, Henry! —It is not possible that you can help knowing it.—And I think you must know too, how truly, how affectionately I love Frederica!"

At the sound of this name, the countenance of Henry became as black as night, but he did not utter a syllable, no, not a sound.—He waited for what was to come next.

"Oh! Dearest Henry!" cried the frightened Fanny, "I see that you will not bear with me! And yet, if you knew how I suffer at this moment, you would not look at me as you do now!"

In order to amend his looks, Henry was pleased to smile, but in such a sort, that the tears which now flowed from the eyes of his sister, were a very natural reply.

How hateful is the influence of passion, when it gets beyond the control of reason! Does it not then become rather like the angry instinct of an animal, than an indication of any movement of human intellect? The pas-

s of the unfortunate Henry were roused,
he really looked at his sister as if he
d her.—He! who never in the whole
se of his life before, had ever fixed his
upon her without their expressing love!
Fanny only caught a slight glimpse of
strange expression; a feeling that was
le up both of respect and affection, caused
to fix her eyes upon the carpet: she felt
to look at him then, was to take him at a
dvantage, and had Frederica herself been
le aware of what he was suffering at that
nent, she could scarcely have pitied him
e tenderly than his sister did.

She paused for half a moment to compose
self, and to recover, as well as she could,
purport of what she wished to say.

"I see plainly, my poor dear Henry, that
have already guessed the errand that
ngs me here," she said.

"Yes, brother, I am come to speak to you
the subject of your too visible attachment
Lady Otway. I speak not to you for my
n sake, nor even for yours, I speak to you

your marked devotion must do he

"Fanny! I will not bear it!" brother vehemently. "I should unfit to live could I patiently en the angelic purity of that faultles pugned! . . . . And by you, F who ought to know her, if it be one human being to know anot *you* insinuate that she is less p tuous, than yourself, is too, too d

"Henry! You wrong me, you self, and beyond all else, you wr by saying that I suspect her of I did so, brother, I should not re discuss the point with you, and quite sure you are as much aware is, therefore, little less than an ou

be dearer to me than Frederica; and when
ll you now, that I love her at this hour,
aps, more dearly than I ever did before,
will, I think, in justice to us both, forbear
ay, that I suspect her of impurity."

Forgive me! For pity's sake forgive me,
ny! I was wrong! I ought not for a
le instant to have suspected you of being
ty of any such wicked injustice, and I sus-
it no longer. But this being so, why is
anny, that you came to seek me here with
ce as white as your pocket handkerchief,
order to reproach me for my too visible
chment to Lady Otway? If you really
eve her to be the pure being you have
ribed, how can my attachment to her be
visible? This is mere nonsense, mere folly,
ny, and in another I should call it absolute
tation."

There is certainly no affectation in what I
said to you, Henry, and in my judgment
e is no folly," replied his sister. "The
, in my opinion, appears to lie with you,
seem to think that, because I have known

ady Otway long and intimately, everybody
lse in Venice must have known her long and
intimately too."

"And there comes in the nonsense, Fanny!
How can you, my sister, be so very silly as to
believe that Lady Otway *née* Baroness Ritter
berg, can care one single farthing what all t
ladies in Venice either say or think
her?"

"If I believed that statement, bro
replied Fanny, gravely; "I should be in
more uneasy respecting Lady Otway,
am at present. But permit me to t
that I know her better than you d
really believe that whatever persons
watching her conduct, she would be
as to what they thought of it."

Henry's colour was again increa
endeavoured to speak temperatel
plied, "It is certainly possible,
you may know how your frien
under any given circumstances,
could do, but at any rate I pre
agree with me in thinking tha

would show itself defective, if she paid any attention to observations made upon her which she did not deserve ?"

"No, Henry; I think no woman would show good judgment who was indifferent to what was said of her, whether true or false; nay, I rather think it would be the false reports which it would be the most worth while to contradict and disprove. If a woman conducts herself so indiscreetly as to give cause for disapproval so just, that it does not come under the denomination of slander, I think her best course would be to remain very quiet indeed, and let the rumour go by, if possible, without its being openly noticed by any one. But should a woman, perfectly conscious of irreproachable conduct, be attacked, the case would be different. I do not mean that such a one should put on her armour and fight her own battle, I rather mean that she should pay sufficient attention to the untrue things said of her, to enable her to discover what part of her own innocent conduct it was which had led to the misrepresen-

tation. The doing this, Henry, could never be wrong, nor could there ever be degradation in it."

"I differ from you altogether," replied her brother, haughtily. "The conduct which, as it seems, you wish to dictate to Lady Otway, would, in my estimation, be exceedingly degrading, and if anything could compromise the character of such a woman, that would do it. But for heaven's sake let us say no more on the subject, Fanny. You are the last person in the world, as you must know perfectly well, that I should wish to quarrel with, —yet quarrel with you I most assuredly shall, if you are silly enough to persevere in this most absurd interference. Permit me to tell you, once for all, that neither of the persons whose conduct you have thus taken it into your head to criticise, either desire or deserve such interference; and moreover, I think that you ought to have confidence enough in both to be quite aware that they do not require it."

There was so excellent an assumption of the

dignity of offended innocence in the tone and manner of her brother as he said this, that poor Fanny, with all her good intentions, and with all her deep persuasions into the bargain that she was right and that he was wrong, felt abashed and silenced.

He saw his advantage instantly, and instantly turned it to account, by taking her hand, and saying with much apparent moderation and gentleness, "You have certainly been very wrong, dear Fanny, in suffering such unjust and absurd suspicions to take possession of you; nevertheless, I am quite ready to believe that you mean well, and I shall, therefore, not permit myself to resent from you what from another would, believe me, be very differently treated. Moreover, I am persuaded that such absurd imaginings never had their origin in your own brain; I strongly suspect that our highly respectable Aunt Monkton has been the original inventor of this nonsense. But you are too young, as yet Fanny, to take your place in a committee of old maids, and I

most earnestly advise you to be guided in your conduct and in your judgment by your own heart and not by hers. But this discussion has already lasted too long; let it never be renewed for both our sakes, for I will not promise to be always so patient and forbearing as I have been to-day."

And having spoken these condescending words, and given the hand he held a sort of forgiving shake, and his own handsome head a sort of admonitory nod, which both together very plainly expressed, "Don't do so any more, my dear," he turned away, and walked towards the door. But ere he reached it, he turned back again, and said, "There is one thing, Fanny, that I must absolutely insist upon, and any neglect of it on your part would displease me to a degree that I am sure you would wish to avoid. It is this: I must positively insist upon it, that you do not, in any manner whatever, allude to the injurious nonsense you have been listening to, in any conversation which you may have with Lady Otway."

To these last words he evidently did not choose to receive any answer, for he had quitted the room before it was possible for Fanny to attempt a reply.

CHAPTER VIII.

[illegible]

But half an hour's quiet meditation in her own room enabled her to examine reasonably, and without either anger or fear, what had passed in her interview with her brother, and she then felt, that though he had braved, he had not answered her, and that the parting injunction he had left with her, and which he had uttered with all the authority of a command, was in no way binding upon her, inasmuch as he had not received any promise from her, either expressed or implied, nay, that he had not even asked for it.

Her resolution concerning the future was speedily taken; she resolved for the present to remain silent, neither alluding to the painful subject which occupied her when conversing with her aunt, her friend, or her brother, nor making any change whatever in her own conduct, continuing to join, as usual, in all the excursions to which she was invited, as the best means of ascertaining whether the remonstrance which had been so cavalierly received

by her brother, might not have produced the desired effect notwithstanding.

But should it unhappily be otherwise, should she see reason to believe that the resolute manner he had assumed was genuine, and intended to convey to her his deliberate intention of pursuing the dangerous path upon which he had entered, she very firmly resolved that in that case she would remember that she had only listened to his imperious command that she should be silent on the subject to Frederica, but that she had given no promise to comply with it, and therefore that she should not only consider herself at liberty to do it, but feel bound by every tie of honour and affection to put her on her guard against the perils that threatened her.

Having thus arranged her future plan of operations, and determined with a steadfastness of purpose which did her honour, to do what she believed to be right, without having the fear of her ever dearly beloved Henry before

eyes, she recovered her complexion and her possession, and placing herself at the beau-

balconial window which overlooked the at Canal, she divided the next three hours ty equally between gazing at the exquisite ıty of the scene that lay before her, and ling the Italian portion of 'Childe Harold.' And how was her brother Henry employed while?

Firm and proud as seemed the step with ch he left his sister, his nerves were con-:rably more shaken by their interview than s had been. In an attachment still nur-ed and still clung to, under circumstances ınfortunate as those in which Lady Otway Henry Harley were placed, the first rmur that reaches the ear of the sufferers, desperate sufferers they generally must be, very first murmur which reaches them, in-ative of a suspicion against which they tered themselves they were effectually rded, must doubtless be always very ter-e.

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what he was

had invariably continued to deserve this praise though the whole of his short, but far from smooth career. Through the painful period of his married life, although the idea of the lost Frederica never recurred to his mind without causing him a pang, and never failed to renew the melancholy consciousness that his life and all its hopes had been blighted, he had never once so dwelt upon the theme as to cause himself one moment of self-reproach.

But matters were sadly altered with him now! Yet so easy is a downward path, that even when it leads to destruction there be many who tread it without giving a thought to its possibly perilous termination.

The agony of my unfortunate hero upon first discovering that Frederica was married, was too intense to be overlooked or misunderstood by one who loved him so devotedly and understood him so thoroughly as she did. She saw the agony, poor creature, as distinctly

as he felt it, nor were her own emotions at all less painful. Yet, woman-like, it was of him she thought, and not of herself, and so true, so strong was the sympathy of affection which united them, that she felt as thoroughly as poor Henry himself could do, that it would have been better for him had he died, instead of his young wife, rather than thus again to meet her with idle hope, and thus again to endure all the terrible revulsion of despair.

It was thoughts and feelings such as these that had seemed to weaken the judgment of Frederica, and led her to think that as long as she kept herself unspotted from everything that the world calls sin, as long as she tenderly watched over the peace of her father and the honour of her husband, she could do no wrong in permitting the wretched Henry to perceive that he was still the same valued friend to her that he had ever been. And there would have been no wrong could her well-intended project of keeping things exactly

the same footing which they had attained
n about a month after the arrival of the
ey Court trio, have been persevered in.
his, little as she guessed it, was impos-

At what moment the pernicious change
ı it would be difficult to say; but a
ge had come upon Henry and upon
erica too. The chief difference between
was that he was aware of it and she
not. She still persuaded herself that,
gh they were not so happy as it was
ble they might have been had she met
y Harley before he had formed the rash
gement which had so miserably entangled
yet that much happiness was still within
reach from the intimate and cordial
ı between their families, and the constant
ment of a companionship which she felt
e as delightful as she believed it to be
ent.

ıt Henry did not so delude himself. The
ure he enjoyed in her society was too

much mixed with pain for him to wish that it should endure. With the dreadfully insidious false reasoning which passion teaches, he had gone far towards convincing himself that as their fate had unhappily placed them in a position so beset with different evils, that it was impossible to avoid them all, the only thing left for them was to choose the least, and patiently to endure that least, while avoiding others that would be more dreadful still.

The lesser, and, in his fevered imagination, this least of evils, appeared to him to lie in the (undeniably) painful circumstances attending the indulgence of an attachment which he was very fully convinced they neither of them had the power to conquer.

But although this most pernicious idea had for some time been doing its dark and secret mischief at his heart, he had never yet found the bad courage which was required to communicate it to Lady Otway, and she had no

more suspicion that such thoughts had ever suggested themselves to Henry than the babe who slept upon her bosom.

It was, doubtless, Henry's consciousness of this which still restrained him from breathing words bold enough to offend her. But, alas! the veil between them was but a thin one; yet such as it was, it was of immeasurable importance as long as it was permitted to remain, for it served to protect as truly virtuous a heart as ever beat in a human bosom from the agony of suspecting its own righteousness.

How long this state of things might have lasted had Fanny Harley *not* lectured her brother in the manner that has been related, it is impossible to say; but this lecture brought matters to a crisis, and before Henry left the gondola which he had chosen as the scene of his meditations, he had decided upon enduring his present condition no longer, having very clearly convinced himself that

what he had suffered from the restraint he put upon almost every word he uttered in his intercourse with Frederica was as much as any man could endure without absolutely losing his reason; and that the addition now come upon him of being reproached for not having made that restraint severe enough, was more than he could endure, without living in the constant danger of losing all command over himself.

It was still early in the day, at least it was still early enough for him to feel sure of finding Lady Otway at home, and to see her instantly, and to see her alone, appeared to him, at the moment he stepped out of the gondola, to be the only thing for which the continuance of life for another hour was desirable.

The familiarity of his *entrée* at the Palazzo Rittesberg had quietly and gradually gone on increasing till it was no longer his custom to seek the intervention of any servant in making

his way to the room constantly occupied by Frederica in the morning. It occasionally happened, when he entered there, that he found her mother with her, but she was oftener alone, for, from the age of fourteen, her father had taught her to understand that the most important part of education was to be sought and found, in solitary study.

This system, indeed, was now often interrupted for an hour together by the presence of her baby, and it was the sight of the baby that Henry most feared as he now entered the room.

But the baby was not there. Frederica was perfectly alone, with an open volume lying on the reading-desk before her.

A quickly exploring eye might, however, have discovered that Frederica was not reading, for the volume was a new one, and though a paper-knife lay half-way amidst the pages, not a single leaf had as yet been cut.

Henry gave one glance at her lovely face,

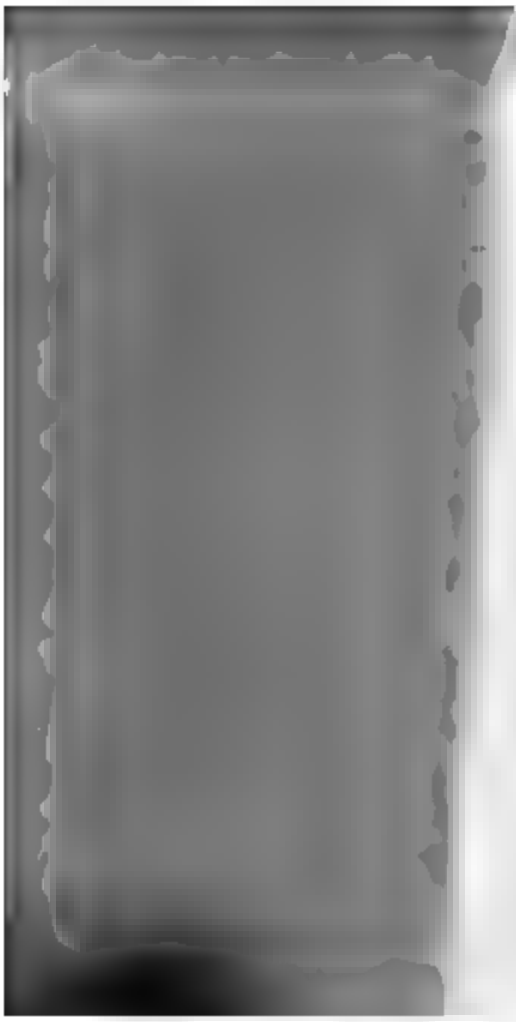
and in an instant the bright carnation mounted to her temples. This was now about the only external symptom of agitation on the sudden appearance of Henry which she had not conquered. In general she yielded her slender fingers to the hand he offered her, with very tolerable steadiness; neither was the quiet little word of salutation with which she received him indicative of any sort of emotion whatever. She rarely or never, indeed, suffered her eyes to rest for a moment on his face, but with all this she had not yet schooled herself into such perfect external tranquillity as not to blush vehemently for a moment when she first perceived him.

And was Harley unconscious of this? Had he not noted it a hundred and a hundred times? And did he ever note it without feeling his own heart bound as if it would leave his bosom? Or did he ever feel this without the deep, deep consciousness that he was beloved?

Poor helpless Frederica! She was not, ·haps, always aware of this weakness, but en she was, she trembled at it. And this mbling, this dread, this terror of herself was dreadful to her, that had she been a free nt she would long ago have taken the only ɔ which could have restored her peace, nely, that of going where she could never him more.

But though the most indulged of daughters of wives, there was no such power left

Had she, indeed, proposed the most ant journey that the round earth could : scope for, neither father, mother, nor band would have made the least objection. would have been quite enough for them know that such a frolic was her wish, in er that it should become theirs. And this knew, poor lady! But she knew, also, t as surely as any change of place was ntioned, so surely would her father, mother,



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artily wish that her mother had been beside r—not to save her from Henry, but to save nry from himself.

She could not long doubt the nature of the and upon which he was now come. No claration of his love for her had as yet ever ssed his lips, but she had often feared that some unhappy moment like the present, the straint so evidently painful to him would at st be thrown aside, and that she should be omed to hear from the being, whom she happily loved far dearer than her own life, e same weak and disgraceful avowal of unensed affection as the light sons and daughrs of folly and of sin so often permit to ter, almost for idleness, degrading thereby l that is noblest and best in the affections of e heart.

She too, now became very pale, and Henry w this as plainly as he had seen the speakg blush which had preceded it; nor was he w to feel that emotion, such as this, did not

betoken indifference. But Henry was not one of the selfish cowardly libertines, who, exceedingly like their prototype, the devil, go walking up and down the earth seeking whom they may devour, and are perfectly contented if they can find a woman weak, without troubling themselves in the least degree concerning any other intellectual quality, although they may swear the while, poor parrots! that it is their SOULS which are entranced by the attractions they adore!

But Henry Harley was not one of those. He had of late, indeed, been deliberately teaching himself to reason falsely, and perhaps he had really suffered so much, as in some degree to weaken the reasoning faculty, and thus have been beguiled himself into the monstrous conclusion, that under the peculiar circumstances in which Lady Otway and himself were placed, it would be wiser to do wrong than right.

It was not, therefore, the weakness of her

t of which he hoped to take advantage, he
wished to pervert her reason in the same
factory manner in which he had perverted
own.

CHAPTER IX.

"LADY OTWAY!" said Henry solemnly, "our acquaintance is not of yesterday. You, and your honoured father also, have known me long enough, and well enough to be quite aware that I am no libertine. But it appears to me, it appears both to my reason, and my conscience, that circumstances, probably unprecedented in their miserable perversity, have placed us in a situation which cannot long continue without endangering the reason, perhaps, the life of both. Heaven is my witness, Frederica, that I have struggled against the misery which has beset me, till all power of resistance seems dead within me, and I feel as

if neither body nor mind had any power to struggle farther. I am come to you now—not for the purpose of saying that I love you, for any such idle assurance would be contemptible from me to you—but I come resolutely to put my destiny, my life, in your hands. I cannot continue to exist as I am existing now, I feel that it is not possible.—It is for you to decide what is to follow. Did I not know—you must excuse my frankness, Frederica, this is no moment for falsehood, or for ceremony—did I not know that you loved me, I could not speak to you as I do now. I am not here to-day to ask for your love, or to expatiate on my own. The time is long since passed when we could either of us have had any real doubt on that subject."

Had this strange, and most unjustifiable harangue been uttered by a man looking at all like one of the "folks of this world," there cannot be doubt that Lady Otway would have resented it, and that in such a manner as

effectually to protect her against any repetition of the offence. The door to her own apartment and that of her child, opened within a few feet of her. But no idea of making her escape entered her head for a moment, and it would have been infinitely more likely that she would have drawn near to the offender than that she should have ran away from him.

His aspect, indeed, was by no means ill calculated to inspire alarm, but not of the kind to make Frederica think of herself. The unhappy young man was ghastly pale, and though he struggled hard to speak with what he intended should be dignified firmness, his white lips trembled so visibly as they gave utterance to his words, that it might have been pretty evident to any cool-headed spectator, that neither his dignity nor his firmness was of the right breed, poor young man, but much of the same mongrel quality as the rectitude and the wisdom which he firmly believed were inspiring every word he uttered.

Had it not been that the eyes, which, with
ort of desperate daring he fixed upon her
e, were so expressive of sadness and of suf-
ing as to suggest the idea that he was more
ely to sink upon the floor, never to rise
ain, than to offend her long by his wild
sonings, she might not have been so gentle,
forbearing as she was.

But notwithstanding all this weakness, and
the madness which had led him to make
is desperate attempt to mend his condition,
had touched the right chord when he told
r that their mutual love was mutually known
them, and Frederica, as she listened to him,
ould no more have condescended to affect
ny doubt concerning the truth of the state-
ent he had so audaciously made, than she
ould have done had he asserted that she
ved her father or her child.

This plain speaking, therefore, was decidedly
ry judicious, for it saved a vast deal of pre-
tory declamation, and enabled him at once to

place before her the question which he had come thither to propound, namely, whether upon mature reflection, and after consulting her own heart, and deliberately weighing the good and evil of permitting him to love her, or refusing that permission, she would decide upon saving him from the dreadful destiny which threatened him, or determine to abandon him to it, let the consequences be what they might.

It was unfortunate for Frederica that Henry had too much good taste, or too much good tact, to threaten self-destruction, for had he done so, it would probably have gone far towards restoring her to the perfect possession of her judgment. As it was, she was terrified, not indeed for the safety of his life, but of his reason.

Nor was it either his manner or his appearance only which suggested this fear, the wild purport of his words had still more to do with it; for while to her heart's core she felt the

truth of his bold assertion, that their love was mutual—and mutually known, the strange wildness and audacity of his views for the future, seemed to her as totally devoid of reason as of right feeling, and she looked at him as piteously, and almost as gently, as a mother might have done who was watching with mixed terror and tenderness the delirium of a child.

But Henry was not absolutely delirious, though lamentably mistaken just then, as to the best mode of enduring the unquestionably severe misfortunes which had fallen upon him. The unhappy young man had indeed suffered long and very acutely, and a homily, very pregnant of wisdom, might easily be preached on the heavy crop of sorrow which often follows the sowing of a little folly.

Had poor Harley listened a little more to the warning voice which had whispered caution to him even among the sweet breezes of Killarney, and looked with a little less of intoxica-

tion into the soft eyes of the pretty Louisa, how different a destiny would have been his, during what is generally considered as the brightest part of human existence!

Unquestionably he was greatly deserving of pity, because so large a portion of his heaviest calamities had arisen from his honourable adhesion to the rash engagement which had been the bane of his existence. And Lady Otway felt this as deeply as she felt the love which she had given, with all the ardour of young and most innocent devotion, before she guessed that there was any call for pity towards the happy, animated being who excited it.

It was therefore terror, and pity, and anger, which she felt as she looked and listened, and the first words she uttered were anything rather than harsh.

"My dear, dear friend!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands, and looking at him imploringly. "Do not make me endure the

pain, the misery of seeing you suffer thus! You would not, dear Henry, if you knew how much I have suffered already!"

"I do know it!" he passionately replied. "If I did not, think you I should have addressed you thus? I do know it, Lady Otway, and it is not only to save myself from a living death, it is to save you also, my precious, precious Frederica! Listen to me then! Listen to me as the friend that knows you best and loves you most! I know well how you love your admirable father, and I know well how he loves you. But can you with truth declare that you believe his love equals mine? Will you even venture to declare that your love for him equals that which at this moment you feel for me?"

This was a question which ought, certainly, to have made Lady Otway very angry, but unhappily it only frightened her. Instead of feeling, as she should have done, its offensive audacity, she only felt its truth, and if both

consciousness and remorse for her own weakness could have atoned for its sin, she would have stood absolved.

No such consoling thought as this however, suggested itself, and the miserable Frederica felt so completely crushed and heart-broken, that every hope of extricating herself from the dangers and difficulties with which she was surrounded, seemed absolutely wild and impossible, and for one terrible moment she felt all the anguish of believing that she was lost.

Had Henry been conscious of all the bitter agony he was causing her to feel, it would certainly have stopped him in his mad career, but he saw nothing, understood nothing, but that he was indeed beloved, and that Frederica no longer intended to conceal it from him.

He had before worked himself into a state of mind which very nearly resembled delirium; it was, however, more like the delirium of despair, than of hope; but the sudden change

of feeling produced by her tacit acquiescence in his bold claim upon her affection, evidently deprived him of all command over himself, and of everything approaching to the power of reflection, for he wildly threw himself on his knees before her, clasped his arms round her, and impressed a kiss of unrestrained passion upon her lips.

But Henry Harley, though perfectly right in believing himself beloved, was quite as perfectly wrong in presuming that such a woman as Lady Otway was capable of becoming the thing which in his pitiable madness he wished to make her.

The very utmost extent of the terror which had seized on Frederica when she felt unable to deny her devoted affection to him, went no farther than the seeing herself degraded in her own eyes, by having avowed the sin and shame of loving one man, while she was the honoured and trusted wife of another, and of loving him too, avowedly better than the father who loved

nothing on earth so dearly as herself, was considerably more than bad enough to make her look upon herself as a creature so desperately guilty as to be utterly sunk in her own esteem.

But beyond and below this degree of guilt it had never entered the head of the home-taught Frederica to plunge, even in thought.

It has often been said, and very truly, that a thoroughly depraved woman is a more dreadfully and desperately wicked animal than a thoroughly depraved man. This is truly said, and the reason is obvious. Before a woman can be thoroughly depraved she has many more dirty downward steps to take than are necessary for a man before he arrives at the same level, and he therefore reaches it without having done himself so much mischief by the way.

But if it be allowed, on one hand, that a wicked woman is a worse thing than a wicked man, it cannot be denied, on the other, that

a thoroughly virtuous woman is a much purer creature than any man that ever was born.

As an instance of this, it may be fairly stated that Henry Harley, who most decidedly belonged to a high place in the moral scale of humanity, was, at that moment, no more capable of estimating the degree of offence which his audacious embrace occasioned to Lady Otway, than a red Indian could the degree of horror produced on a European by the long established use of the scalping-knife.

And how was her indignation shown? Did she utter any words of displeasure? Did she look at him with eyes flashing with wrath and detestation? No. She spoke no word; she breathed no exclamation. For one short moment she remained as motionless as if made of stone. In the next, brow, cheek, and neck became almost frightfully crimson; and then she rose, and without, for a second, raising her eyes towards him, walked

silently, and with a very tolerably steady step, out of the room.

How much would Henry Harley have given, at that moment, to have heard one word of indignation from her lips! But this was a consolation which he was not doomed to receive. The feelings of Lady Otway as she left him were not such as human beings are accustomed to relieve by the pouring forth of angry words.

CHAPTER X.

THE condition in which Henry Harley was now left might have appeared enviable to a man about to be hanged, but not to many others. The clearness with which he, at that moment, felt his own position was in strange contrast to the blindness with which he had rushed into it. He now, for his especial torment, judged both himself and her with very perfect correctness, although a few short minutes before he had been as blind as a mole, in his judgment both of the one and the other.

The mystery, however, is easily explained.

The furious whirlwind of passion which ha long been restrained by the many powerfu checks with which both Frederica's situatio and his own had surrounded him, had at las most unhappily overpowered him, and by th weakness of a moment he had forfeited al the merit of the admirable endurance of suf— fering which he had manifested for so many miserable months. Frederica herself could scarcely have judged him more severely than he now judged himself, nay, of the two she was likely to be the most lenient. He felt, as he looked round the little boudoir, into which he had been so freely permitted to enter, how completely she had trusted him. There was not a single object in the room that did not speak of her, and of her exclusively, yet here he had been suffered to consider himself more at home than any other human being, with the exception, perhaps, of her own mother and his sister.

And how had he repaid her for this un-

ing confidence? He had insulted her, y insulted her! And it was her un- d, though deeply disappointed affection, had encouraged him to do it! "Ought " thought he, bitterly, "ought I not at to rejoice that I have cured her of this able peace-destroying love? Oh, Fre- a! Thou wilt never love me more! sorrow, at least, has passed away from for ever!"

d as he murmured this miserable con- on to his heart tears, of which he was tly unconscious, ran down his cheeks.

d Frederica seen him at that moment l any infirmity of weakness have crept her heart and made her pity him? This trial she was at least spared, for she saw not, nor was she even thinking of him at moment.

s securely alone as it was in the power cks and bolts to make her, she sat herself to meditate upon her own situation.

It is necessary to enter into the very heart and soul of Frederica in order to comprehend how perfectly novel, how perfectly unexpected this situation was to her.

The knowing she was beloved by Henry was not new to her; the knowing that she loved him was an idea equally familiar to her mind. These two facts she had long known and long dwelt upon, as the great calamities of her earthly destiny; but the idea that this calamity might degrade her into vice was as new to her as any notion of robbery or murder could have been.

It would be difficult to say whether sorrow or terror predominated, as she meditated on the terrible scene which had just passed. The sorrow, perhaps, was, in a great measure, on her own account, but the terror was altogether for him. She felt convinced that his reason was shaken, and that it probably rested with her, and depended on the wisdom or the weakness of the measures which she might

take, whether the fine mind which, in its healthy state, she had so highly reverenced and so fondly loved, should be saved or lost.

She was too much shaken, and really felt too seriously unwell to venture upon meeting, and being obliged to converse with any one that day. Her gentle mother she knew would come, and of all human beings she was the one she least dreaded to meet, for if she saw her looking ill, there would be no idle questionings or ingenious speculations about the cause, and if she asked for quiet, this dear mother would take care that she had it. Her kind husband, too, might come and go without causing her any annoyance; but the idea of seeing her father was positively terrible to her; for they had so many themes and theories, schemes and arrangements in common, in all of which, as Lady Otway now painfully remembered, Henry had a far greater share than any other member of their society,

that the going, according to her usual custom, into the baron's study, was advisedly going to talk of Henry Harley, and this, now and ever, she was resolutely determined to avoid.

And the inevitable meeting of the two families at dinner! Was she in a state of mind to endure this? Was Henry? When she asked herself these questions every feeling of her aching heart, every thought of her working brain seemed to answer in chorus, "we never ought to meet again."

And if the recent conduct of Frederica had been such as in any degree to merit the reprehension which Lady Frances Monkton had cast upon it, the fact that she wished, during this terrible meditation on the scene which had just passed between them, the simple fact that she then wished, from the very bottom of her heart, that they never *might* meet again was quite enough to prove that if her judgment had been in fault her heart was right.

It was not long before the nurse and baby entered her room, (the bolts being quickly withdrawn at the glad sound of his approach,) and then Frederica sent a message to summon her mother, and complained to her, not without a very sufficient foundation of truth, of so much head-ache as speedily to elicit the wished-for prescription of going immediately to bed.

It is useless to remain with her any longer. It is useless to follow all the harassing thoughts which chased each other with feverish rapidity through her head. Assuredly there was much of difficulty in her situation, and it was by no means an easy task to decide in what manner to extricate herself from an intercourse which she was determined should no longer continue, but without the least intimation to her father, mother, Lady Frances, and poor Fanny, that it was her wish and will that put a stop to it.

These thorny cogitations, in fact, produced

more fever than the act of lying in bed could take away, and though not quite so ill as she was miserable, she was not driven to any falsification of facts in order to convince her mother that she was really too unwell to appear at dinner.

Lady Frances and her niece arrived, according to their established daily custom, about ten minutes before the soup was announced, and this interval was very naturally occupied by the details of Madame Rittesberg concerning the indisposition of her daughter. Her explanation of this illness, however, seemed to satisfy everybody.

"I was quite certain," she said, "when she returned from the gallery yesterday, that she had over fatigued herself; I saw it at once by her manner, for when I asked her about the pictures that they went on purpose to see, (the Titian, you know, that has been so long away,) she seemed too tired to recollect anything about it. ..... And, moreover, she

says, dear child, that it is possible she may have taken cold from having remained so long on the water. However, I do not think she is ill enough to make us seriously uneasy, and she is doing the very wisest thing possible by keeping in bed.

This produced, of course, a little discussion about colds in general, and colds brought on by over fatigue, and late boating, in particular, and this lasted till Lord Otway having pulled out his watch for the second time, remarked to Lady Frances, that her nephew was considerably later than usual.

"He is indeed," she replied, looking at Fanny, who had mentioned to her the extreme indignation which Henry had manifested upon her having hinted to him the impropriety of making Frederica the object of so much marked attention. This meaning look was returned by Fanny, who was beginning to feel very uneasy lest her lecture might have occasioned his absence.

"Indeed, you must not wait for him, dear baroness!" said she earnestly. "My brother has all his life been in the habit of forgetting times and seasons, whenever anything happened to come in his way that he was particularly anxious to examine."

"Then it would indeed be folly to wait for him in Venice," said Lord Otway, laughing, "for I know no place on earth more likely to make a man forget his dinner, if he be at all liable to such weakness of intellect."

"Very well, then, the dinner shall be ordered," said Baron Rittesberg," though this is the first time since his arrival here, that our friend Harley has shown any symptom of the intellectual infirmity to which his lordship alludes."

So the dinner was ordered, and the party walked through the gallery which divided the saloon from the dining-room, precisely in their usual order; for the Lord Otway invariably presented his arm to his mother-in-law, and

the Baron Rittesberg as invariably took charge of Lady Francis and her niece. The only difference was, therefore, that there was no Frederica, and no Henry, to bring up the rear. But this difference was quite sufficient to alter the whole tone of the entertainment. The baron seemed persuaded that Henry had only been delayed by some accident, and that he might be expected every moment to appear; for which reason the door of the room was never opened without causing Baron Rittesberg to turn his head briskly round towards it, and the natural result of such often repeated disappointments was that by degrees the brisk turn of the head was converted into a slow movement, and that the benignant countenance of the baron assumed an expression as nearly approaching to vexation as it was possible it could wear.

Perhaps, with all his lang syne admiration and partiality for his young friend, the baron had never before been fully aware how much

of their animated table-talk depended upon Henry. It is true, that the party always sat down at their round-table in the same order in which they entered the room, so that Frederica and Henry were constantly seated next each other, but this had never led to anything approaching tête-à-tête conversation between them. Henry's love for the daughter had never interfered with his affection, his admiration, his genuine liking for the father, and never did the conversation fail, or flag when they were together, nor did it want the evident air of enjoyment manifested by Frederica when listening to, or joining in their conversation, in order to make Henry more brilliant while talking to him, than upon any other occasion whatever.

The contrast to this was now certainly rather remarkable. Lord Otway, however, who was beginning to hear rather less promptly than he used to do, decidedly felt it the least; for his appetite had never failed him as yet

and whenever this is pre-eminently remarkable, the table is generally felt to be more important, than the table talk.

The baroness observed that they were all very quiet, but thought very naturally that her beautiful daughter being both absent and ill, was quite enough to account for it. But if the baron looked grave, poor Fanny looked graver still, and well she might; for whereas, the gravity of the kind and hospitable host was only occasioned by lamenting that a favourite guest should be too late for dinner; that of Fanny, was produced by the oppressively painful recollection of the conversation she had held with him in the morning.

The terrible tone of his voice as he uttered the angry words, "FANNY I WILL NOT BEAR IT," positively haunted her. It was the first time in his life that he had ever spoken to her harshly, and the idea that he was still too angry with her to endure to place himself at the same table, recurred to her again and again,

till she not only fancied it possible, but believed it to be certain.

She would have given the world could she only have been alone with her aunt for a few minutes, in order to hear her opinion upon the degree of resentment which it was probable or possible that Henry could feel in consequence of what she had said to him in the morning.

As to Lady Frances herself, she too, was very far from being at her ease, though she was not making herself quite so miserable as poor Fanny. There was something in the simultaneous disappearance of the lady and gentleman who were missing, which greatly annoyed her, and the countenance of her niece, who could not, in spite of all her efforts, look otherwise than out of spirits and anxious, which led her to suspect, very unjustly, certainly, that she had some recent cause for uneasiness, of which she had as yet said nothing.

It would be difficult to imagine an evening assed in a manner more unlike all the former venings which the same party had passed ogether, than this was to all its antecedents. That the absence of any two of the accustomed et should make so very great, and so very ismal a difference, seemed strange to them ll. But at length, about an hour and a half efore their usual hour of seperation, Lady 'rances rose, and declared that she suspected ady Otway of having communicated both her atigue, and her cold to her, for that she felt o completely overpowered by sleep, as to be incapable of keeping her eyes open for a ioment longer.

And having made this rather uncivil confession, which was however in some degree edeemed from its rudeness by the playful nanner in which it was spoken, she seized pon the arm of her niece, and pretending to est her own head upon Fanny's shoulder as he went, hurried out the room.

"Thank God!" said Fanny, as she inclos herself and her aunt within the door of th own drawing-room. "I could not, no, even three short hours ago, I could not h believed it possible, that the leaving the dr ing-room of Baron Rittesberg could have b so great a relief to me! For Heaven's s Aunt Frances, explain this mystery—for t you have been under the same spell as unfortunate self is quite certain—seeing t you have looked precisely as ill at ease I have felt. What is the matter with Aunt?"

CHAPTER XI.

"SIT down, my dear child! sit down!" replied her aunt, setting her the example by dropping into an arm-chair with the look and air of a person who was exhausted with fatigue. Fanny obeyed, by extending herself very nearly at full length upon a sofa; and thus they remained with their eyes closed, and to all appearance fast asleep, for two minutes.

"Fanny!" said the aunt, changing her lounging position for one perfectly erect; "Fanny, I find that I am not at all sleepy."

"Nor I either, Aunt Frances," replied the niece; adding, with a sigh, "I wish I were."

"I have no such wish, my dear," was the elder lady's reply; "on the contrary, I have the greatest possible desire to be wide awake, and that you should be wide awake also. Tell me, in the first place, what was the matter with us all at dinner? I am well aware that my nephew Harley is a very clever young man, and that your unfortunate favourite, Lady Otway, is a very clever young woman; but it would be too absurd to suppose that their absence could so effectually have extinguished the spirits of the whole party, had there not been some other cause for it. I should be sorry to alarm you for nothing, Fanny, but if you would give me the world, I cannot get it out of my head that wherever Lady Otway passed this evening, there Henry Harley passed his likewise."

"And I, Lady Frances," replied Fanny, "could not get it into my head that you

are right—oh, not if you would give me a dozen worlds."

"There is no use of our talking together on this subject," said Lady Frances, almost angrily; "our opinions are so completely at variance, that we can neither of us hope to find any feeling approaching to sympathy in the other. Let us at once agree to differ, and then go on as long as we both shall live, without ever talking about Lady Otway at all."

"Agree to differ with you at this moment, Aunt Frances!" exclaimed poor Fanny, very dolorously, while her tears attested that she was very much in earnest. "Oh! do not say so, even jestingly, for never in my life before did I want your affection and your judgment so much as I do now."

"And you shall have both, my dearest love," replied her aunt, rising, and approaching her. "Let us share the sofa, Fanny, and open our hearts to each other, fully and sin-

cerely, on the subject of the too evident attachment between our unfortunate Henry and Lady Otway. It seems to me impossible, my dear girl, after what you have told me respecting your conversation with him, that you can doubt the terms they are upon. Did he deny his attachment? Did he say a syllable approaching to a contradiction of your suspicions, or rather of the painful observations which you had felt it your duty to make? In short, did anything, either in his manner or his words, throw, in your opinion, any doubt upon the facts upon which you had thought it right to remonstrate?"

"No, certainly not," replied Fanny. "I have no doubt at all as to his attachment to her. I believe that, most unhappily, he is as much devoted to her now, as he was when they parted at Rome. From my heart I pity him! With little, very little, for which he can be justly, or rather let me say severely blamed, he has contrived, poor fellow, to mar

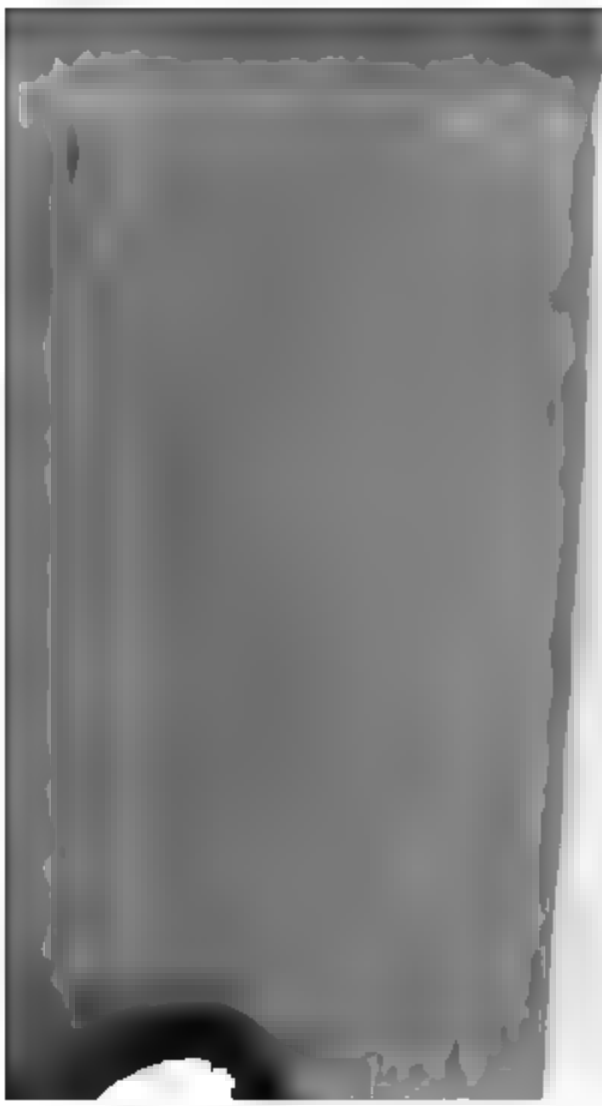
the happiness of his whole existence. With so many advantages, both from nature and fortune, his life seems doomed to disappointment!"

"It is all very true, and all very sad, my poor Fanny," replied Lady Frances, affectionately, "but this ought not to make us shrink from the painful duty of separating him, if possible, from Lady Otway."

"Nor do I shrink from it. The only point on which we differ is in our estimate of the character and conduct of Frederica. I would give my right hand to separate them, but I will not achieve this by means of any unkindness or of any suspicion against Lady Otway."

"And you do not believe that they understand each other? You do not believe that they have mutually acknowledged their affection?" said Lady Frances.

"Aunt Frances," returned Fanny, after a pause; "it is impossible that they should be ignorant of each other's affection; nor do I



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tion at that time, had not his still unbroken engagement with poor Louisa forbade him, as a man of honour, to attempt it. But, things being as they were, I am still very decidedly of opinion that the beautiful and much-admired young Baroness Frederica von Rittesberg, was no more likely to fall in love with a man who had never asked her to do him that favour, than I think you were likely to fall in love with the Pope. The case is widely different now, my dear Fanny. Just remember all you heard and saw of the state of society at Rome, and then just look out on all that is going on with so little attempt at concealment here, and then tell me honestly if it is not more likely that the wife of an old man like Lord Otway should accept the attentions of such a young man as your brother, who now, at least, makes no secret of his adoration, than that such a girl as Frederica should have bestowed her heart, unsolicited, at Rome?"

Fanny Harley loved her Aunt Frances very dearly, and with reason, for from the earliest period of her recollection to the present hour, she had ever found in her a most loving relative and partial friend. But she was at that moment conscious at the very bottom of her heart that they did not and could not understand one another. Fanny's estimate of Frederica was not formed alone upon the young girl's personal qualities, but upon those of her father likewise; and the close, the very close union of heart and soul which she had watched between this father and daughter, rendered the idea of Lady Otway's being what Lady Frances supposed her to be, absolutely monstrous.

But Fanny had both common sense and observant experience enough to know that such a blundering estimate was not within the reach of correction by any remark, observation, or statement which it was in her power to make, for battles or matters of opinion rarely

end in conquest on either side; so she only replied, "We have agreed to differ, you know, so let us cease to discuss so very difficult a subject as the closest secret of a woman's heart. As facts arise, our conduct must be regulated by them, and in that respect, dear aunt, there is no danger that there would be any very serious difference of opinion between us."

"By which I presume you mean, my dear Fanny, that if Lady Otway actually elopes with your brother, you will agree with me in thinking that you and I had better not accompany them?"

"Yes, Aunt," replied Fanny, drily.

"Well! that important point having been both wisely and wittily arranged on both sides, let us now talk, merely as a matter of fact, you know, of the strangeness of Henry's absence. We will not take Lady Otway's being absent also into consideration, because that makes you angry; besides her absence is

accounted for, she says she is ill, and of course we are bound to believe it. Indeed, I think her being ill is very natural under all the circumstances; for you may depend upon it, my dear Fanny, that your brother did not take himself off without announcing his intended departure to her. Common politeness, indeed, demanded this of him."

"Surely you are jesting, Lady Frances, when you talk of Henry's having taken himself off, as you call it. Surely you do not seriously believe that he has left Venice without having communicated his intention of doing so to us?" said Fanny.

"Only in the same sort of way, my dear, that he did at Rome. We shall receive a posthumous letter, be very sure of it. But do not look so terrified, Fanny; Henry is a most excellent person in a thousand ways, but that he is sometimes impetuous and sometimes rash, cannot be denied. However, his leaving Venice just now, is perhaps the best thing he

could do, and in short I cannot see in any possible way how harm can come of it."

"And I might think so too," replied Fanny, looking very miserable; "if I did not believe that it was what I said to him this morning which has induced him to go. He left me in anger, in greater anger than he ever felt against me before, and I shall know no peace till I see him again!"

"Then I can only say that I hope you will see him again very speedily, my dear," said Lady Frances, cheerfully, "and at any rate do not let us take up sorrow at interest. I have little or no doubt that he will meet us at breakfast to-morrow morning, and meantime let us go to bed and sleep off the effects of our horribly dull dinner."

"But if we do not sit up for him, I hope his servant will," said Fanny, "and should you not like before you went to bed, Aunt Frances, to ask his man if he had received any orders from him?"

The man was immediately summoned, but could give no information whatever. He knew, indeed, that his master had been in his bed-room before the time that he had himself entered it, in order to prepare his things for dressing for dinner.

"And how do you know that, Gilbert?" said Fanny, eagerly.

"Because one or two of his drawers had been opened, miss."

"How do you know they had been opened?" demanded Lady Frances. "Had he removed anything?"

"I can't say for certain, my lady," was the reply, "but it could not have been much. The only thing as I missed, and that was because I seed it this very morning, when he sent me to the drawer for his gloves, the only thing as I missed was his passport. He has moved that, and put it away in some other place, that is quite certain, but he could not have put it into a better, for there was nothing

else kept in the drawer but his gloves, and I was sure to know where to find it when it was wanted."

"His passport!" murmured Fanny, with something very like a groan.

"Well! Good night, Gilbert," said Lady Frances, with a nod of dismissal. "Of course you will not go to bed till after Mr. Harley's usual time of coming home. It is very possible that he may have gone upon some little excursion into the country. However, the hotel servants are always up, at least some of them, so you need not stay up very late. Good night."

And then, though with somewhat of a lingering pace, Mr. Gilbert departed.

"His passport!" reiterated Fanny, as soon as the door was closed. "What do you say to it now, Aunt Frances? What do you think of the effect of my unfortunate lecture now?"

"I think, Fanny," replied Lady Frances,

after a minute or two of deliberation; "I think that if you reported to me fairly what you said to him—and of this I have no doubt whatever—I think that there must be some other cause for his taking his passport than any which your words gave him."

Fanny felt that there was too much seeming truth in this for it to be possible for her to contradict it; yet still the same confidence remained at her heart respecting Lady Otway's perfect innocence of anything and everything derogatory to her principles or her feelings as a wife, a mother, a daughter, and a friend.

Lady Frances, meanwhile, had her own thoughts, suspicions, and imaginings; but she kindly and wisely kept them all to herself, for poor Fanny looked too profoundly miserable to bear any additional vexation well. Her ladyship, therefore, affectionately kissed her cheek, and only said, in addition to the kind "Good night, dearest!" with which she dismissed her,—"At any rate, Fanny, there is no cause to fear for his personal safety."

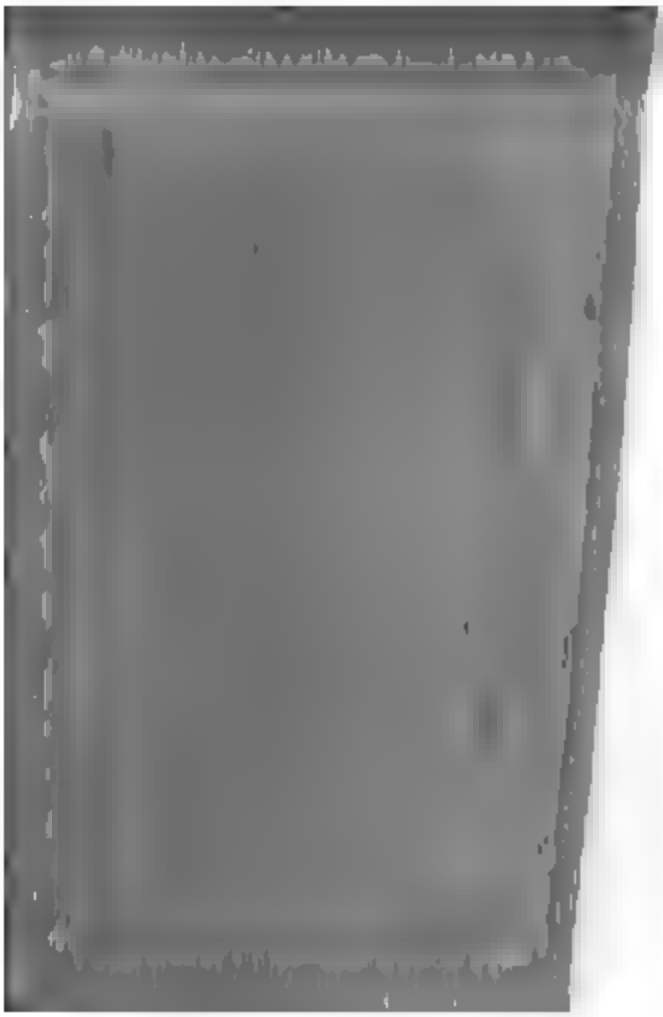
But to herself she said, as she at length composed herself to sleep. "It can never do, after all, for an Englishwoman to fancy that she shall meet with women as good as herself in any other country under the sun. I have long thought that my poor Fanny would find herself disappointed in her matchless Frederica. And now, poor girl, it will not be many hours before she will be convinced that my estimate of her was nearer the truth than her own. I am sorry for her! But it is better she should know the truth at once."

CHAPTER XII.

It is not quite necessary, nor would it be quite easy to describe exactly how Lady Otway passed the evening which had been found so far from agreeable by the guests of her father; it must suffice to say that she remained very quietly in bed till about eight o'clock the following morning, when she rose as usual and paid her accustomed daily visit to her mother. In answer to the many tender inquiries which greeted her there, she declared herself to be quite well, and apologized for her absence of the evening before by

saying that she had been suffering from that peculiar species of malady which she had heard termed a *stupid headache*, and which enforced, as she declared, an immediate retreat from society, as much on account of others as of one's self.

"If that was the nature of your malady," replied the baroness, "I protest to you that I think it must have been infectious, for though our party, with the exception of Mr. Harley, who dined somewhere else, was exactly the same as it has been every day for the last two months or more, it seemed as if a thick black veil had fallen over the intellect of each one and all of them. Nobody seemed to relish their dinner, nobody seemed inclined to talk, and at a little past eight, I think it was, Lady Frances and Miss Harley took their departure, after having looked, for the last hour, as if they longed for nothing so much as permission and opportunity to go to sleep."



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during the whole of this speech, in undoing the mischief which she had perpetrated on the preceding day, by infusing a wrong shade of green into at least three several rose-leaves, to which, as she fancied, she had most successfully put the finishing touch; and this more than usually interesting occupation happily prevented her from perceiving that her daughter was not wholly exempt from the species of weakness for which she had been blaming Fanny Harley, for though Lady Otway did not weep upon hearing that Henry had not returned to his home during the night, she changed colour upon hearing of it, and her whole countenance expressed too much emotion to have escaped even the uninquisitive eye of her mother, if it had not been wholly engrossed by a different object.

But idle chit-chat, such as the baroness loved, and such as Frederica often exerted more ingenuity to furnish than it had ever

cost her to comprehend the most fanciful theories of her father, was beyond her power now; but she apologized for her sudden leave-taking by saying, what was quite true, that she had not seen her baby since breakfast.

On returning to her own boudoir, even the baby itself was another moment forgotten, for the first, and in truth the only thing she saw on entering the room, was a very small note, inclosed in a very small cover, which was lying upon the table exactly opposite to the chair in which she usually sat.

She had not been in the habit of receiving notes from Henry Harley, but she knew instantly, and almost instinctively, that this note was from him. It is probable that she, in some sort, shared Fanny's anxiety respecting his absence during the night, for it never occurred to her that it might be proper, after what had passed between them, to tear the note to atoms instead of reading it. The note was a very small note, but the writing

was very small writing also, and the communication was therefore a longer one than might have been anticipated from the size of the envelope. It ran thus :—

"Frederica, I have offended you, and knowing this, my venturing thus privately to address you by letter must doubtless be another offence, another proof of presumption, not only in your eyes, but my own. And what is this but another link in the fearful chain of inevitable delinquencies in which I have been so long entangled? What greater misery can befall man than the being placed in situations where, really wishing to do right, he finds himself in a dilemma that compels him, whichever way he turns, to do wrong? Should I dare to remain in Venice, and, taking advantage of the intimacy between our families, continue to approach you as a familiar friend, what might not the offence be to you? What might not the madness be to

myself? If, forgetful of all I owe your father, to whom I cling as to the most precious friend I have on earth, if, forgetful of all he has been to me, I should suddenly break up the project we have formed of all passing the following year together in traversing the continent of Europe, and *that* without the power of assigning any reason for it, should I be acting rightly? To my aunt, and my dear sister also, I am bound equally by duty and affection; how can I righteously play the tyrant with them, and say, 'follow me in this direction!' when I know that inclination, if they listened to it, would lead them to go in another? All this is too difficult for me,—I am no longer the same man I have been; all clearness of intellect, all strength of purpose seem equally to have forsaken me. It is you, Frederica, who must mould the shape of my future destiny. If you will permit me again to approach you, address one line to me, 'To be left at the Post Office till called for,'

intimating your permission that I should take my accustomed place at your father's table this day. If I do not receive this, I shall not appear—nor then, nor ever! There is no valedictory form by which I can describe myself to you, better than you know me already.

"HENRY HARLEY.

"P.S.—Do not decide to remain silent too hastily. The consequences will neither be light nor temporary."

The reader must please to remember, what he has been repeatedly told before, namely, that the unfortunate Frederica loved the man who thus put his destiny in her hands with a very fervent and devoted affection, which, however bound, as it were, in fetters by her duty, had never really known a shadow of change, the reader must remember this, or he

will not do justice to the sort of holy firmness with which she at once decided, with truth and faith as firm and unconquerable as her love, that if the never seeing Henry Harley again depended upon her will, their separation should be eternal.

She could not obey hisl ast parting entreaty that she would not decide hastily, at least as far as hastily and quickly be the same, she disobeyed it very decidedly; for not for an instant did she doubt.

If the possibility of such weakness occurred to her mind at all, it certainly came accompanied by the wisdom which dictated that terrible-sounding saw—

"The woman who hesitates is lost."

If there *was* one single moment of weakness at her heart, it was that in which she *almost* paused, before she applied the lighted taper to the last characters she could ever expect to see traced by his hand and addressed to herself.

But it is scarcely fair to call it a pause, for "ere it came, 'twas gone."

* * * * *

The anxiety produced on the minds of Lady Frances and her niece by the unwonted absence of Henry, was a very uncomfortable feeling to both, but it differed both in quality and degree. Nothing could take it out of the head of Lady Frances that, although Frederica was not, as yet, the partner of his flight, she was the confidant of it; a fact which she felt so confident would be proved by the sequel, that she did not endure Fanny's equally firm adherence to a contrary opinion, quite as gently as might have been desirable.

There was, therefore, apparently more of anger than of sorrow in her annoyance, by which the suffering of the self-accusing Fanny was very greatly increased. She dared not, however, hint to her aunt that she repented

the severity with which she had spoken to him, for few hours passed over their heads without a pretty sharp fillip from her ladyship upon the very blameable weakness they had both shown in suffering such an attachment to manifest itself openly before their eyes without at once withdrawing themselves from what it was so extremely improper that they should witness.

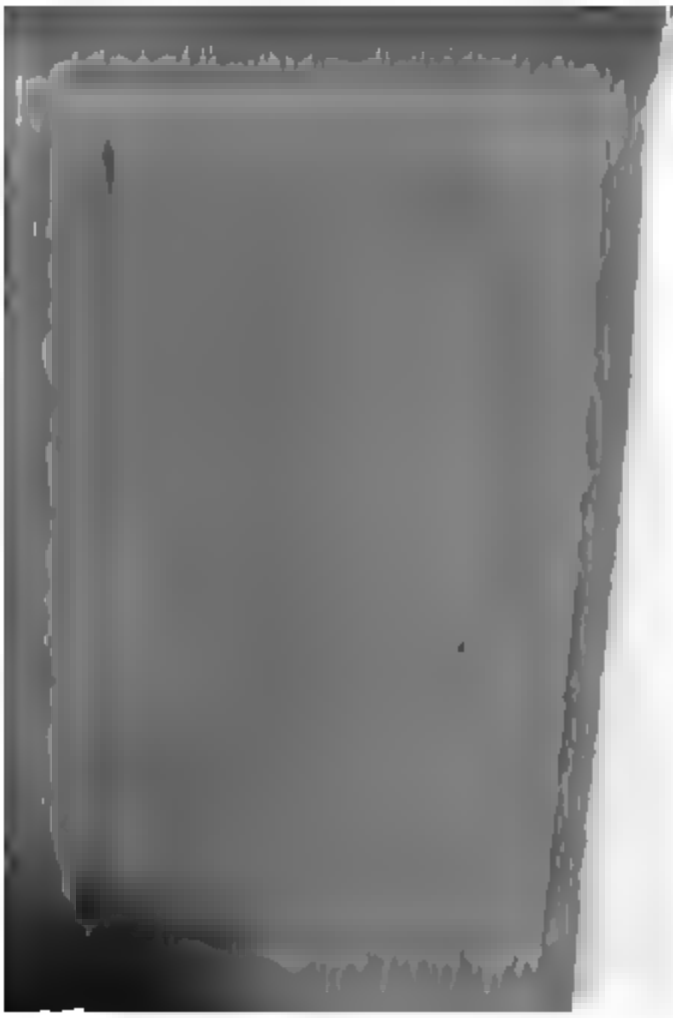
Nor were these painful discussions the only misfortune which they had to endure in consequence of Henry's disappearance. Had he been himself aware of all the annoyance, not to say suffering, which his ill-weighed act had entailed upon all the sincerely attached friends whom he left behind him, he would not have committed it. For in truth it was a selfish act. He had shrunk from the endurance of a species of misery which he ought rather to have resisted than fled from; and that with a forgetfulness of the feelings of others, so utterly foreign to his natural character, and so every

way unworthy of him, as to prove, clearly enough, if any such proof had been wanting, that the master passion of his heart was one which, under existing circumstances, required to be smothered and not cherished.

Three tedious days and nights elapsed without bringing a single line, or message of any kind, to either his sister or his aunt; for so long had the unhappy young man determined to wait, in the hope that some intimation might reach him from Frederica, counselling him to return, even though refusing to receive him again on the same intimate terms as formerly.

But no such imprudent step being taken by her, he at last determined to prove to her, hard, cold, and cautious as he thought she had proved herself, that he had not sought to move her by any vain threats, but that his purpose of withdrawing himself was as sincere as her wish could be that he should do so.

His last unfortunate visit to Lady Otway



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do. I certainly feel now in a state of mind which would make society, any society, painful to me, and being conscious of this, it appears to me that my wisest course will be to withdraw myself for a time, and see what a little solitary rambling will do for me. You will not expect, under such circumstances, that I should prove a very frequent correspondent, but you shall, from time to time, have tidings of me. I shall write to my aunt, both to say farewell, and for the purpose of offering the use of Harley Court both to her and to you in case, after finishing your rambles in Italy, you should like to return to it. God bless you, my dearest Fanny! You have ever been an excellent sister to me, and, if I live, I hope I shall be able to be a better brother to you than heretofore, for I have been the cause of much unhappiness to you. Farewell, dearest, and if you blame my seemingly selfish love of solitude, let something of pity for the very untoward circumstances of my past life

mix with the feeling, and if it does, I think you will forgive me.

"Ever your affectionate brother,

"HENRY HARLEY."

To Lady Frances Monkton he wrote as follows:—

"I am so perfectly aware, my dearest aunt, that the step I am about to take will appear, to say the best of it perhaps, an act of folly in your eyes, that I have not sufficient courage to attempt either explanation or defence of it. My present communication, therefore, shall be confined to matters of business. Should the wandering disposition which leads me from you be so favourable in its effects upon my health and spirits as to make me, in all respects, a more companionable person than I am now, I shall hope to renew, both in letter and in person, the affectionate intercourse which you have hitherto so kindly permitted and

from which I have derived so much happiness." * * * * And then followed the offer of Harley Court, which he stated it to be his intention to keep up in the same manner as when he lived there, followed by the assurance that nothing would give him more pleasure than knowing that it still continued to be the favourite residence of herself and Fanny.

To the baron he wrote also, and the writing this letter was both the most difficult and the most painful task he had to perform. It was thus he wrote :—

"The past intercourse between us, my best and dearest friend, has been a source of such constant enjoyment to me, that I have more than once in the course of it, carefully avoided themes of personal sorrow and suffering, though well knowing that I was sure of your sympathy, because I could not endure the idea of clouding the serenity of a spirit (even through

pity for myself) which
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cious or unwise in m
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party.

"Ever gratefully and

Whatever other letters were written by Henry Harley before he left Venice, were entirely confined to subjects connected with his pecuniary affairs, and were addressed to his English lawyer, banker, and servants.

CHAPTER XIII.

It must be quite superfluous to state that these letters caused a feeling of deep sorrow and almost of dismay, in the persons to whom they were addressed. Fanny was, of all the parties addressed, the one who the most nearly understood the real motive for Henry's departure, and she would have found great comfort in this, could she have prevailed upon her aunt to listen to her arguments, which went to prove that her confidence in the right conduct of her friend now rested upon what might very fairly be called proof. "How could it

be possible, Aunt Frances," said she, "how could it be possible for any man, unless he were wicked and weak enough to throw himself into the canal, to give any plainer indications of despair than our poor impetuous Henry has done? Do you really think that if Lady Otway had encouraged his attachment, he would have fled away thus, heaven knows where, solely to be out of her reach?"

"I never in the whole course of my life, Fanny, met with any one who had such a knack of talking nonsense, with the air of pouring forth the most admirable good sense, as you have," replied her very angry-looking ladyship. "Because your brother Henry has not favoured either of us with a postcript to say that Lady Otway knew perfectly well where he was, (probably at no great distance) because he has not said this, you think you have the right to assert, as a fact proved, that she is perfectly and altogether ignorant of his whereabouts, and has been run away from

solely because she is a model of conjugal love and fidelity."

"Do not, dearest Aunt Frances! Do not let us quarrel about it," returned Fanny, with clasped hands and tearful eyes. "Are we not unhappy enough already?"

"As far as I am concerned, my dear, I certainly shall not be less so by endeavouring to persuade myself that your wildly romantic view of this extremely disagreeable affair, is the correct one. Nonsense never had any charm for me, nor ever will. All I can do towards keeping you as long as possible in the sort of fool's paradise, which you have fabricated for your own especial use and consolation, I am willing to promise—that is to say, I am quite willing to talk no more about it."

To this Fanny made no reply, and the conversation was permitted to drop; and there was some relief in this, but not much, for let them talk of what they might, the only sub-

ject which filled the heart and the head of poor Fanny, was the mysterious departure of her brother, and the terrible uncertainty as to his return.

It was no interruption of these thoughts, but a bitter addition to them when the idea of her next interview with her friend suggested itself. For one agitated moment she thought that perhaps their best course would be to set off immediately, as if to join Henry and so escape all the discussions, and abortive attempts at explanation, which must inevitably follow any interview with either the Rittesbergs or Otways.

But a juster estimate of what they all owed to the long proved affections of these valued friends, soon chased the cowardly idea away, and not many more minutes of silent reflection had passed before Fanny resolved that she would see Lady Otway, put into her hands the letter she had received from Henry, and be guided as to her future conduct towards

her by what should pass during their interview.

It was the first time in her life that Fanny had ever taken any important step when her aunt was within reach of her, without communicating it. But to do so now would be to break the compact of silence to which she had tacitly agreed, and this, she was quite resolved should not be her act; she therefore silently left the room, which fortunately produced no observation from her stately-looking aunt, and having equipped herself for the short transit between the neighbour mansions, took her way with a beating heart to the boudoir of Frederica.

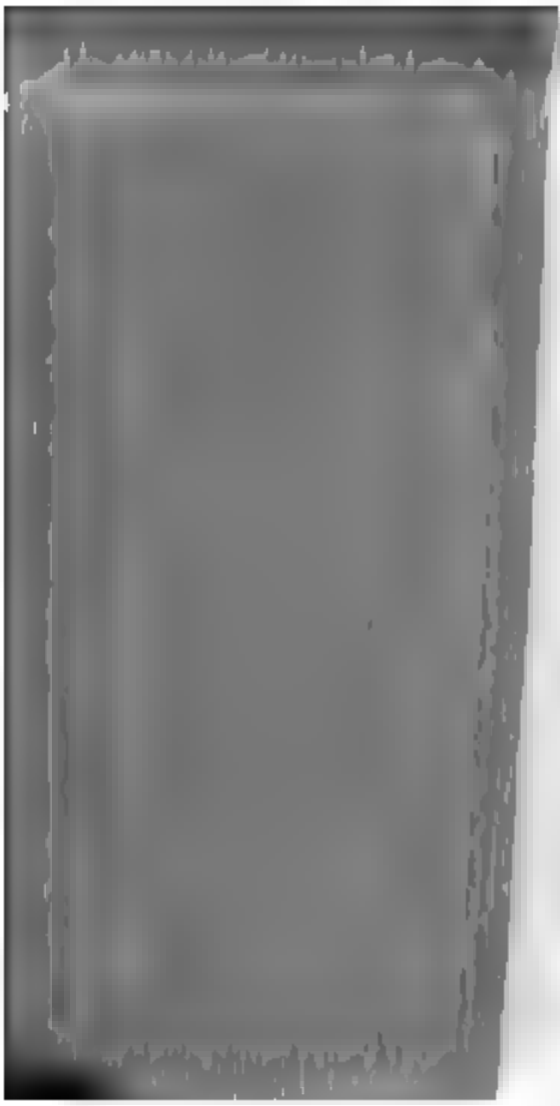
She, too, had learned to reach it without the ceremony of being announced. She did so now, as usual, and had she wanted an excuse, the open letter which she held in her hand furnished it, for the strange absence of Henry had hitherto been only mentioned among them as a young man's capricious *escapade*,

to which the baron said he had doubtless been tempted by some flying fellow-countryman, who had probably pounced upon him while promenading St. Mark's Place, and flown off with him in his grasp upon a sentimental tour to the tomb of Petrarch at Arguâ, or upon a shopping expedition to Trieste.

This letter, therefore, the first document which had reached any of them as to the real intention of Henry in thus suddenly quitting Venice, was quite ostensible cause enough to account for Fanny's unannounced appearance.

She found Lady Otway looking exceedingly pale, and complaining of headache, which she might do with very perfect truth, that painful accompaniment of agitation having been for several days her constant companion.

"At last I have a letter from Henry," said Fanny, placing the open letter in her hand, and that hand trembled visibly as she received it.



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The letter was read through. Fanny was still immoveable at the window, and it was read through a second time. And then Frederica rose, and going to the spot on which stood her dear, true, sympathising, though not confidential friend, and having replaced the letter in her hand without speaking, she gently opened her arms and inclosed her in a warm embrace, resting, for one short moment, her blushing face upon Fanny's shoulder.

But that short moment over, Lady Otway seemed to forget that she had seen the letter, for she never alluded to it afterwards. They returned together hand in hand to the sofa which Frederica had occupied when Fanny entered, and having placed her in her own corner, with her own little footstool under her feet, as if to give her notice that she was to make herself comfortable, and not be in a hurry to run away, she kissed her smilingly on the forehead, and said, "Be a good girl, and wait for me patiently for one moment,

and I will show you something so very pretty that you will be obliged to confess it wa worth waiting an hour for!"

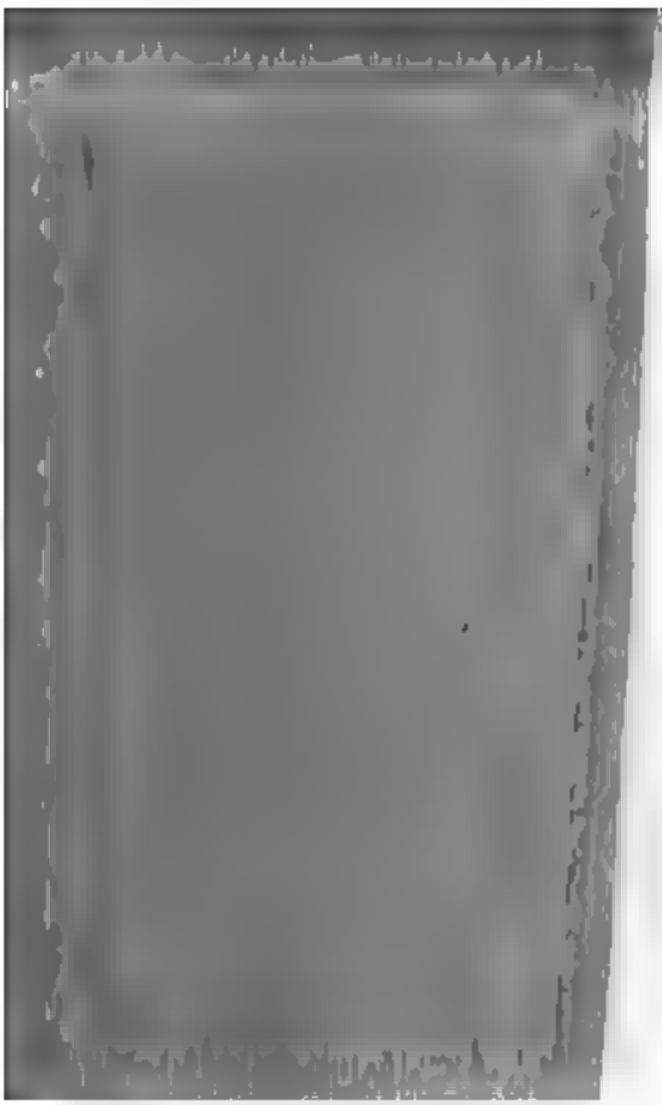
Having said this, she retreated through th door which led to her own apartment, an after a delay not much longer than would b absolutely necessary for the delicate manœuvr of changing a baby's cap, she returned wit her child in her arms, saying, as she displaye him in a most becoming attitude to her friend "Do you know your own work, Fanny? I it not beautifully made up? I certainly think it is the very prettiest cap that fair fingers ever worked, or that fair baby ever wore."

Had the strongly-prejudiced Lady Frances Monkton been present during this scene, she would have turned from it more firmly persuaded than ever that Lady Otway was a light-minded, coquettish woman, who, having gratified her love of admiration by turning the head of Henry Harley, and amused herself by watching the effect of the tender passion upon

a sober-minded Englishman, was perfectly willing and able to forget him the moment he thought proper to take himself off.

She would, doubtless, have seen, too, a most satisfactory confirmation of her own theory as to Frederica's never having cared more about him during the period of their acquaintance at Rome than she would have done for any and every young man of equally distinguished position, and equally well-looking and agreeable.

The interpretation of Fanny was widely different, and she, too, adhered very steadily to all her foregone conclusions respecting her unhappy friend. Nor was this adherence to their own respective opinions any symptom of self-willed obstinacy in either. It was, in fact, pretty nearly inevitable, for the person who had so widely mistaken the character of Frederica once, as we know Lady Frances had done, was not at all likely to understand it better upon further acquaintance; while, on



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sternly, of a danger that she saw approaching, she had never for a moment judged him harshly, or ceased to remember that whatever she wished changed in his feelings, had been the result of a cruel concatenation of circumstances, far more deserving of pity than blame.

It was, therefore, a great and soothing pleasure to her to listen to the warm expressions of unaltered affection for him which were perpetually uttered by Baron Rittesberg, and this pleasure was infinitely increased by perceiving that this steadfast affection, and from such a man, was the result of having deeply studied his character. The analysing of a marked character was one of the baron's favourite hobbies, and he did it well; nothing seemed to escape him, and the more delicate and less obvious the trait he developed, the more he loved to dwell upon it, and show how its unsuspected influence might be traced where it was least likely to appear.

Fanny was always amused, and often de-
lighted, while this was going on, and her
intimate knowledge of the individual under
discussion enabled her to form a juster esti-
mate of Baron Rittesberg's acuteness in such
matters than he often found in those who
listened to him on similar subjects; the
natural consequence of which was that he
often recurred to it, and contrived to make
as she told him, as clever a series of miniature
moral sketches of her brother as ever was
produced.

All this went on with little or no discussion
concerning his prolonged absence, or the
cause of it. Yet it was clear to Fanny that
with all his acute reading of her brother's
character, the baron had failed to discover
the secret of his heart. Nor did this greatly
surprise her. She had known Baron Rittes-
berg long enough and well enough to be aware
that the multitude of little outward demon-
strations by which admiration, and even love,

is so often betrayed to ordinary observers, are less likely to attract the attention of so speculative and habitually absent a man, than many of the intricate modifications of character which to others never make themselves visible at all. All this led to a good deal of what may fairly be called intellectual intimacy between them, which was not without pleasure to both. But on the part of Fanny there was a drawback to this. These cosey conversations were generally carried on when Frederica made one of their little coterie, and when they generalised in their observations on the capricious varieties of human nature, and the chain of theories that grew out of them, almost connecting earth with heaven. As long as they generalised in this strain, she took an active part in their discussions; but it rarely occurred that the baron fell back upon his favourite theme of Henry's specialities without at once silencing his daughter. Nay, it more than once happened, though he,

good man never perceived it, that Frederi upon these occasions got up and left them finish their conversation *tête-à-tête*.

"Were it not for this," thought Fanny, her solitary meditations on the subject, "w it not for this I should believe that she h succeeded in her endeavours to forget wh he had been to her." But the repeated rec rence of this forced upon her the pain convection that the wound was not sufficient healed for her to be quite fearless herself wh it was touched.

CHAPTER XIV.

LADY FRANCES MONKTON, meanwhile, began to feel that she had had enough of Venice, and became certain that there was little or nothing left which it is customary for strangers to admire, which she had not seen, and seen well. But the unpleasant difference of opinion, on the subject of Lady Otway, which still continued to exist between her and her niece, rendered their daily union with the Rittesberg family, which had been the great charm of their Venetian residence, very far from agreeable to her. Lady Frances was really

a very "charming woman" in many ways. She was truly and affectionately attached to her nephew and niece, and had a multitude of good and loveable qualities besides, but, nevertheless, she did not like to have her judgment so completely set aside, as was evident the case with Fanny concerning Lady Otway. And, however the feeling might have originated, it was by no means difficult for her to persuade herself that her wish to remove both herself and her niece from Venice arose from the conscientious feeling that, as Cæsar's wife ought not even to be suspected, so neither ought the niece of Lady Frances Monkton to be suspected of living on terms of the closest intimacy with a married lady with whom her brother was desperately in love.

It is probable either that Lady Frances did not really consider her niece as being in any very serious danger of contamination from associating with Lady Otway, or else that she

had some misgivings as to the perfect facility of removing Fanny from the circle in which she was decidedly enjoying herself as much as she could hope to do anywhere in the absence of her brother. Some fear or other of this kind must certainly have occasioned the delay which took place between the complete conviction to which her ladyship had arrived, that the proper thing for them to do would be to await at Harley Court the return of its master, and the communicating this conviction to her niece. Delays are often dangerous, and in this instance delay was fatal to the project of Lady Frances. Had she made the proposal about a fortnight earlier, Fanny might have found it very difficult to have refused compliance; but while the aunt unwisely suffered "I dare not," to wait upon "I would," circumstances occurred which rendered the reasonings of the niece against complying with her wishes almost unanswerable. The good, kind, gentle Ba-

roness Rittesberg, who had been long suffering from failing health, suddenly became alarmingly worse, and the very best advice that Italy could furnish having been called in for a judgment upon her case, it had received the melancholy sentence of dropsy. The grief of the affectionate tender-hearted baron was deep and sincere, and for some days after the hopeless sentence had been made known to him, he seemed to be so completely broken down in health and spirits, that poor Lady Otway felt almost as much alarm for him as for her mother.

But like all other highly impressionable people, De Rittesberg, on being told that his wife's danger was not immediate, suddenly conceived hope that she might eventually recover, and this idea produced so restorative an effect upon him that there seemed to be a general though tacit agreement amongst all around him that it would be better not to undeceive him. But as he recovered the

health which the first shock of his wife's danger had shaken, Frederica seemed likely to lose hers. As yet she had supported her sorrow with a greater degree of quiet resolution than could have been expected from one whose nerves had already been severely shaken by suffering, but now her courage seemed to fail. In truth, she saw her mother's state such as it really was, but it was only when her still more dearly loved father seemed no longer to require support from those around him, that she appeared to lose the power of giving it.

It was exactly when things were in this state, that Lady Frances Monkton received a very civil letter from her noble nephew, Lord Randalby, announcing his intended marriage with a very charming young heiress, who would, he said, be highly flattered if his aunt would join the other members of his family, in doing honour to his nuptials by her presence.

Had this proposal reached Lady Frances Monkton a few months earlier, she would have

shown it to her niece Fanny with a smile, and the observation, perhaps, that the invitation was very civil, but not a very convenient one to accept. But now the case was altered. The letter contained a postcript, in which the noble writer stated his fears, that it would be in vain for him to hope for the presence of his well-beloved cousins of Harley Court, but that he should be only too happy if it should happen that they should return to England in time to grace the approaching ceremony with their presence.

"Would it be possible," thought Lady Frances, as she read this, "would it be possible to persuade Fanny to return with me! It would be a most happy opportunity for putting an end to the German fever, which seems to have attacked her with almost as much violence as her brother."

Not very certain of success, but very much in earnest in her wish for it, Lady Frances seated herself at the beautiful balcony that

overlooked the grand canal, determined to await the arrival of Fanny, who was gone to make her usual early visit of inquiry at the Rittesberg palace, and to address her as soon as she appeared with a proposal, as nearly approaching a command as she could well make it, that they should immediately prepare for their return to England, in order to be present at the splendid nuptials of Lord Randalby.

But it was a good while before Fanny reappeared, and to her aunt it appeared longer still, nor had the interval passed in a manner to make it at all probable that she would find her niece in such a state of mind as she would have wished.

In fact, Fanny returned from her friend with her heart half-broken by the state in which she had found her. The baroness had passed a night of unusual suffering, and the opinion of her medical attendant was much less favourable as to the probably rapid

increase of her malady than it had hitherto been. This had overpowered poor Frederica in every way, for not only did it give her the melancholy assurance that no gleam of hope was left, but it harassed her with a most painful feeling of uncertainty as to the propriety of permitting her father any longer to deceive himself as to the certainty of the result.

"Will he not suffer more severely still when it does come? If it be unexpected, may it not shock him to a degree that may seriously injure his health?" said Lady Otway, looking wistfully in the face of Fanny for counsel and decision that she had not courage to dictate to herself. And great was her sensation of relief, when Fanny very confidently answered, "No! Be very sure that his noble mind will not be wanting to itself when the trial comes. Do not torture yourself, my dearest Frederica, to tell him that, the knowledge of which, if communicated to him now, would give him great and lengthened pain,

rithout any possibility that such knowledge ould be useful to any one."

"Your judgment shall decide me," replied ady Otway, "and I am most thankful to you or it! Never before, I think, did I feel so reakly distrustful of myself. What should I e without you, my dear and *perfect* friend?" The emphasis upon that word "perfect" effectually supplied the want of any lengthened explanation between them. It produced all the good, without any of the danger that night have lurked in a more explicit discussion of the peculiar tie that bound them to each other, and Fanny had the comfort of feeling to her heart's core, that she was, indeed, a source of consolation, comfort, and support, to the purest hearted and most truly noble-minded being it had ever been her lot to meet with.

When in addition to this, she saw her looking pale, thin, anxious, and careworn, it will be easily understood that when Fanny left

her at length, and rejoined her aunt in the
own drawing-room, she was not particular
well disposed to listen with favour and appr
bation to the scheme for setting off imm
diately for England, in order to share in t
festivities of her cousin Lord Randalby's g
wedding.

Poor Fanny did not look very gay as s
entered the room, which caused her aunt to op
the conversation by exclaiming, "Mercy
me, Fanny! How wretchedly ill and mise
able you are looking! I declare to you that
think the arrival of this letter, which I ha
just received from my nephew Randalby, is
positive godsend, for I think all that is goi
on here is killing you by inches! This is
summons, my dear, to your cousin's weddi
which I fancy will be a very splendid affai
and moreover, it furnishes an excellent oste
sible reason for our immediately leaving th
quarters in which your brother has thoug
proper to deposit us, and that too without o

appearing to set off because we are in despair of his ever coming back to look for us."

Fanny was so completely taken by surprise, that for a moment she remained silent from literally not knowing what to say. There was no longer any reason, however, to reproach her with paleness, for a very bright glow rose rapidly to her cheeks, as the idea by degrees clearly reached her mind that her aunt's purpose was to induce her immediately to leave Venice.

Had she been a violent tempered and impetuous person, it is highly probable that she would have made such an answer as must have produced a very serious quarrel between herself and her aunt; but instead of this, she only permitted herself to look a good deal surprised, and then said very quietly, "I do not feel ill, Aunt Frances, and if I look miserable, it is only because a friend so dear to me as Frederica, is feeling so. Her mother has had a very bad night, and is worse this morn-

ing than she has been at all. The physician says that her state is very precarious."

"Of course it is, my dear Fanny," returned her ladyship, endeavouring not to look provoked at the no notice taken of her important announcement. "Nobody, declared to be in a dropsy, can be otherwise than in a precarious state."

Fanny said nothing.

After a somewhat awkward silence, Lady Frances resumed the conversation by saying, "I know, and have long known, that you have attached yourself to foreign friends rather more, perhaps, than your English ones might approve; but even this can scarcely account for the ungracious indifference with which you receive the important tidings I have given you respecting the nearest relation you have in the world, excepting your brother. Did you hear me, Fanny, when I told you that your cousin, Lord Randalby, had written to me to announce his approaching marriage, and to

invite us both to be present at the ceremony?"

"Yes, Aunt Frances," replied Fanny, with a sigh.

"May I ask why the announcement of an event so every way agreeable, should cause you to sigh?" demanded Lady Frances, with the appearance of great astonishment.

Fanny tried to smile. "My sighing was not on account of Lord Randalby's marriage, dear aunt," she replied; "on the contrary, I am very glad to hear of it, and I sincerely wish him and his wealthy bride much happiness. My sigh was occasioned, I believe, by the striking contrast between the scene to which you tell me I am invited, and that in which I am at present engaged. But I cannot forsake a suffering friend who wants my assistance, in order to swell the *cortége* of a happy relative, who does not."

"You do not mean to tell me, I hope, that it is your intention to remain in Italy when I

return to England?" said Lady Frances, with the look and accent of a person who was uttering a proposition too monstrous to be supposed serious.

Fanny did not immediately reply. She remembered the expression of Frederica's sweet pale face as she had said, "What should I do without you, my dear, perfect friend?" But she remembered also that it would not be proper for her to state, specifically, her intention of remaining with Lady Otway, till she had been specifically invited to do so. Her reply, therefore, was intentionally rather equivocal. "You must forgive me, Aunt Frances, if I postpone for a little while all discussion on this subject. I must have time to think about it, before I answer you. I will come to you again presently," and so saying, she passed through the door that led to her own room, leaving her aunt more seriously angry with her than she had ever been, or ever believed it possible she could be.

CHAPTER XV.

It was impossible that the delay which Fanny had asked for could be long; she therefore only walked through her own room instead of remaining in it, and returned to that of Lady Otway. Had she been a moment later she would have missed her, for she was passing through the door as Fanny approached it, in order to return to her mother.

"Let me speak to you for one moment, dearest Frederica!" said she, and they returned to the room together.

"I am come on a strange errand, my dea r

friend, I am come to ask that you would invite me to become your guest, not for an hour or a day, but for weeks, and it may be months—for it may not be easy for me to find an escort, if I permit my aunt to set off without me," said Fanny.

"Invite you!" exclaimed Frederica, throwing her arms about her. "Is it indeed possible that you will come to me? Come to me at such a moment as this, when nothing but sorrow and suffering can await you?"

"Were it not for this sorrow and suffering, my beloved friend, I should not have the courage to propose coming to you at all," replied Fanny, "for I know that my aunt will not be well pleased by my suffering her to return to England alone."

"How can I thank you, Fanny?" said Lady Otway, bursting into tears. "I will not attempt it! Your own heart will tell you what I feel, better than any words can do it. I would not have believed it possible that any

thing so like a feeling of happiness could have come near me now!"

It is needless to repeat any further what passed between these truly attached friends during this interview; it was not a long one, but it brought comfort and consolation to the hearts of both.

That which almost immediately followed between Fanny and her aunt was of a less agreeable character. On re-entering the drawing-room, Fanny found her aunt engaged in very earnest conversation with the courier who had accompanied them from England, and who had remained with them ever since their arrival at Venice. He was in the act of pointing out the most desirable route for returning to England, without going over the same ground which they had traversed on leaving it; but Lady Frances stopped him as soon as her niece appeared, by saying, "We must think about it, Louis, and I will speak to you again presently."

The courier departed, and the aunt and niece were tête-à-tête. Fanny felt very certain that their conversation must be an unpleasant one, and being determined to get it over as speedily as possible, she entered at once upon the subject that was to be discussed, by saying, "It is very painful to me, Aunt Frances, to say or to do anything that may be displeasing to you; and it is evident from what passed just now, that it is your wish that I should accompany you to England immediately. This, I am sorry to say, I cannot do. The present state of Lady Otway and her family is such that I should think it wrong to leave her, and I have therefore promised to remain with her as her guest, if you decide, as you seemed to intimate just now, upon leaving Venice immediately."

"Most certainly I have decided upon leaving Venice immediately," replied her aunt, "and I shall be equally grieved and surprised if I find you so ill-advised as to refuse to accompany me."

"And I shall be grieved at displeasing you, Lady Frances," replied Fanny, gently, but very firmly.

"I am quite aware of your right to do so, if such be your pleasure," returned her aunt, "and I am quite aware also—too well aware, unfortunately—that your brother, who is of course your natural protector, will be quite sure to approve your changing my chaperonship for that of the Lady Otway. You are *of age*, Miss Harley, your handsome fortune is entirely at your own disposal, and therefore, beyond all contradiction, you are at liberty to go, or to stay, as you best like."

"Yes, Aunt Frances, I am not only of age, as it is called, but seven long years beyond it, and I, therefore, do feel that I am justified in deciding for myself upon a question which not only concerns my happiness, but, in my estimation, my duty also. I do assure you that I think it is my duty to remain with my friend, Lady Otway, during her present

affliction, and if you believe this assurance, I cannot think you will be surprised at my doing so."

"No, Fanny; my surprise will date from an earlier period. My surprise arises from your so strangely mistaking your duty."

It is useless to pursue such a discussion any farther. Both ladies were very much in earnest, and both ladies very sincerely believed themselves to be right; and in about a week afterwards they parted, rather coolly on both sides perhaps, but still without anything approaching to a quarrel, Lady Frances being sufficiently reasonable to feel that Fanny had a right to please herself, and Fanny being dutifully disposed to allow that this concession was all she had any right to ask for.

That Fanny was not mistaken in thinking that her beloved friend would soon require all the support that affection could give, was proved by the rapid decline of the baroness, which was followed by her death in rather less

than a fortnight after Lady Frances had taken her departure.

So beautiful, so gentle, so affectionate a wife, could not be lost at the still early age of forty-two, by a man of so warm-hearted and loving a nature as the Baron Rittesberg, without causing him very acute suffering. He did suffer acutely, and so tenderly did his daughter watch the heavy eye, the languid step, the seeming mental indifference to all that used to interest him, which followed upon her death, that her own sorrow seemed merged in his, and she would have thought it a very selfish weakness had she indulged in any outward appearance of grief in his presence.

How she would have borne up under all the painful feelings which weighed upon her heart had Fanny not been with her, was a question which she often asked herself; but there was something in the devoted affection of one who knew her so *very* well, that soothed and almost healed every grief.

And happy indeed was the chance which gave her such a friend, for while her father still seemed vainly struggling to conquer the oppressive melancholy which weighed upon his spirits, the ever kind and amiable Lord Otway was afflicted with so painful an attack of gout, that his angelic wife not only forget herself, but almost forgot her father also, in the ceaseless and unwearied attention that she gave him.

And then indeed the companionship of Fanny became invaluable, for Lord Otway, who had always declared that next to his own wife she was the most charming woman he had ever known, would now actually permit Frederica to be absent from him for an hour together, without looking miserable, provided Fanny was there to talk to him, read to him, or play backgammon.

There certainly was, during this time, a strange enough contrast between the sort of doubtful morality which Lady Frances in her

heart attributed to Frederica, and in some sort to her deluded niece likewise, and the admirable manner in which these two charming women were passing their lives.

Everything in the shape of out-door amusement was entirely given up, for Lord Otway was now completely a cripple, and the idea of leaving him for the sake of amusing themselves elsewhere never occurred as a thing possible either to his wife or her *accomplice* friend, for accomplices they most assuredly were in everything. The dearly beloved baron, meanwhile, was daily becoming more reasonable. Not that he became less sensible of the heavy loss he had sustained, but that he became more so to the ceaseless efforts of his matchless daughter to console him under it. And when he watched this, and thought how admirable her conduct was, he felt that the best return he could make for such devoted affection was to prove to her that it had its effect, and that he was still conscious that

benignant heaven had left him a blessing tha ought to make life a pleasure, and not pain.

But, nevertheless, Venice was no longer th Venice which he had so thoroughly enjoye when the little domestic circle which ha made it so delightful to him was complet One must have seen, as I have done, ho very delightfully exciting to intellect, as we as to affection, the union of a young man wit one old enough to be his father may becom when restraint is banished on one side, an authority of all kinds on the other; one mu have seen this in order to comprehend full what the intercourse had been between th baron and Henry Harley. Why the youn man, who had appeared to enjoy this not ver common intercourse as keenly as he had don himself, should have so suddenly withdraw himself from the circle where he was so wel estimated and so truly loved, the good baro could not guess, and as his study of mankin

had consisted wholly in tracing the powers, efforts, and varieties of the human intellect, without ever fixing his mental vision upon the casualties which influenced their short-enduring destiny in this earthly portion of their passage onward, there was no more chance of his discovering the real cause of his absence than that he should suddenly satisfy himself as to the precise nature of electricity.

But though the cause of his absence was a blank in the mind of the Baron Rittesberg, the effect was not. He would have been vastly more comfortable if it had been, for a mere blank could never have produced all the disagreeable feelings he endured when some new book, or some new thought had taken possession of him, and he remembered that he had no longer the clear-headed Henry Harley to discuss it with him.

He was conscious, too, more conscious than he usually was of passing circumstances, that it was a constantly recurring pain to him to

sit down at table opposite the place wl
his fair and gentle wife had so often l
smilingly and lovingly at him ;' and the
next letter he received from the agent
long forsaken German acres suggested t
the remembrance of his once dearly b
old castle, and with it came the idea th
should just at that time like nothing s
as to pay it a visit, and wander again th
all the wild, picturesque, and well-remem
recesses of his own paternal forest.

The reader may, perhaps, be already
that the Baron Rittesberg had been w
fully indulged in all his whims—some
might call it wonderfully spoiled, perh
and heretofore, such an idea as this of
a visit to his native home could not
entered his head without his immed
deciding in his own mind that he wo
off upon the journey that would tak
there with as little delay as possible.

But now, poor man, notwithstandin

love and affection not only of his devoted daughter, but of her husband likewise, he had a sort of consciousness that the measure ought to be talked about, and Lord Otway consulted, before it was finally decided upon. Had he been really a tyrant in spirit, instead of the dearly-loved projector of everything that everybody best liked, his sick spirit might have fretted at the idea of opposition; but no feeling of the kind could, by possibility, find place in him, and the difference only showed itself by his saying, "I wonder how Lord Otway and dear Fanny Harley would like to pass a month or two at my old German castle?"—instead of saying, as he would have done in days of yore, "Our next move shall be to Schloss Rittesberg."

But Frederica herself would have been much more disconcerted if this move had not taken place, after knowing that it was his wish, than the autocrat baron could ever

have been in his most absolute days; and as the good-natured Lord Otway immediately persuaded himself that nothing would be so likely to do him good, and chase his enemy the gout, as a complete change of air, she did not find the task she had set herself a very difficult one.

As to Fanny, she patronized the scheme to the full as cordially as the baron himself. She had as yet seen little or nothing of Germany,—nothing, indeed, save what that vastly beautiful high-road, the Rhine, had shown her the first summer she had ever passed abroad, when the chief object of the excursion had been to steam from Rotterdam to Mannheim, and to pass a month at Baden Baden.

But this had been fully sufficient to make her long for more; and had her unhappy and self-banished brother been with her, she would have looked forward to this per-

fectly novel expedition with very great delight.

But from Henry she had of late heard nothing. His last very brief letter, without date and without post-mark, for it was forwarded to her by their London banker, had told her nothing whatever of his projects for the future, but merely said that he was well, and would not fail to let her know if anything occurred to him of sufficient interest to make it worth writing about. In a postscript he told her that if, at any time, she wished to communicate with him, she was to consign her letter to the care of the same person to whom he had consigned his own.

This was miserably unsatisfactory, but, nevertheless, there was nothing absolutely alarming in it; on the contrary, she felt persuaded that, notwithstanding the indignation which he had manifested at her remonstrance concerning his ill-concealed attach-

ment to Lady Otway, it had produced e
more than all the effect she had hoped
and that her excellent though unfortu
Henry had only condemned himself to ban
ment till he had sufficiently conquered all
was wrong in his affection, to permit his a
approaching Frederica without danger ei
to her or to himself.

Fanny was partly right in her conjectu
as to the motives of the penance he was t
imposing upon himself. But she knew
thing of the offence he had committed aga
her friend, or she might have been
sanguine in her anticipations of being
united to him at no very distant peri
She considered the decided step he had ta
as a very satisfactory proof of his wish
conquer the weakness with which she
reproached him, and she felt this to be
best guarantee for his not again deserv
similar reproof. These reasonings and th
hopes so well contented her that she set

on her perfectly novel and perfectly unexpected journey in excellent spirits, and with very rational hopes and intentions of enjoying herself almost as much as if no misfortunes had ever befallen her.

CHAPTER XVI.

NOTHING, perhaps, could have been im
gined so favourable, as a restorative to Bar
Rittesberg's happy spirit, as this journe
The scenery, which is assuredly some of t
loveliest in the world, was as new to Fr
derica as to Fanny, and their pleasure doubl
his. Nor could there be a greater pro
given that, despite the very strongest love
wandering which it is possible for a man
feel, there is still a love of father-land th
clings to the heart, and makes the return to
after many years of absence, quite as d

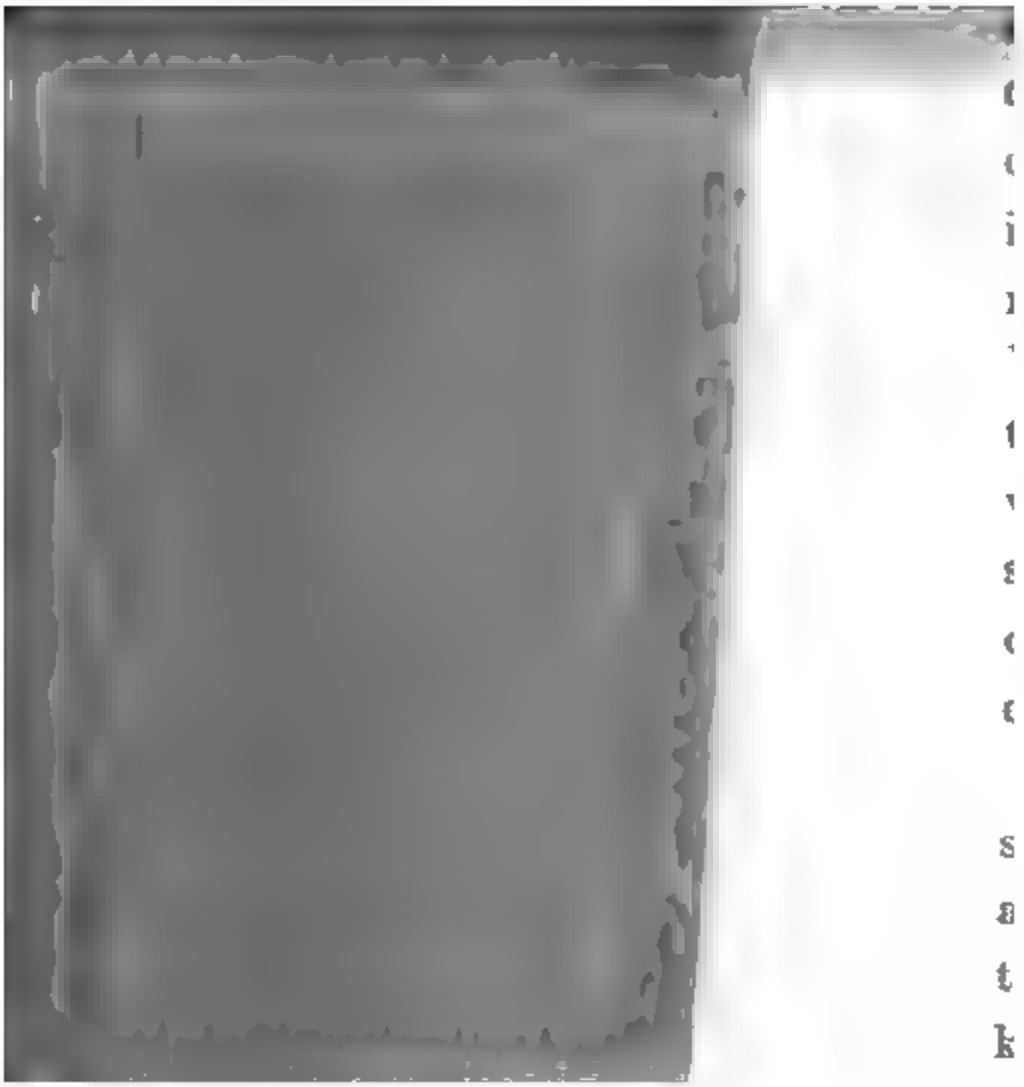
lightful as the running away from it, than the sudden improvement of his spirits.

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow,"

ought to be the hymn of all those who have tested both these very exquisite enjoyments; and is it possible to doubt, as one meditates upon them, that we are purposely constituted in a manner that shall enable us, contradictory as it may seem, to enjoy both? Here is one instance among a million of millions of what, without either nonsense or blasphemy, we may call a *particular* providence.

Their arrival at Schloss Rittesberg had been long enough announced for the old mansion to be made as comfortable as it was in the nature of things to permit; and a tolerably long residence in a *very* magnificent old Venetian palace, is no bad preparative for a subsequent residence in a very roomy German castle.

Had Fanny arrived with railroad speed from Harley Court, the comforts of Schloss



ness, for never had Fanny found her so like the same being she had first appeared to her, as she did now.

But Fanny little guessed the cause of this: it lay in the removal of a fear which had long tormented her. The strange abruptness of Henry Harley's disappearance, together with one uncertain glance caught afterwards, had suggested to her the idea that he was still lingering at Venice; and the dread lest he should be mad enough to seek another interview, had so often recurred to her, as to add an almost constant feeling of insecurity to all her other anxieties.

But now this painful idea had completely left her, and she enjoyed her release from it as one might do who had been haunted by a terrifying spectre, and had suddenly ceased to be so.

In short, no scheme ever appeared to have succeeded better; Fanny was making surprising progress in the study of German under

the tuition of the baron; Frederica was tak
lessons from Fanny in drawing, the o
accomplishment, perhaps, in which the Eng
lady surpassed the German one. The
nourable William Otway was beginning v
boldly to put his feet to the ground, and
right honourable father was daily impro
in the same exercise, when all this
charming domestic enjoyment was put a s
to, by the arrival of a letter from L
Frances Monkton's maid, informing poor Fa
that her mistress was very dangerously ill,
most earnestly desirous of seeing her.

On receiving this painful intelligence, ev
thing that had passed between them of
unpleasant nature, previous to their parting
Venice was as completely forgotten by Fa
as if it had never occurred, and the des
beloved aunt of former days, the indulg
friend of her childhood and her youth,
the only recollection that presented itself;
the returning to her with all possible spe

became, in her estimation, a matter of such urgent necessity, that the idea of waiting for some one to accompany her, was intolerable.

The baron would have willingly cut off his right hand, could the doing so have made him a perfectly unexceptionable travelling companion for her, and he did venture to say in a jesting sort of way, "I think, Frederica, the best plan would be for Lord Otway's old groom, whose service is at present a sinecure, my venerable huntsman, and myself, to constitute a body guard, that could be objected to by no one. What say you, Fanny? Would you accept of it? Say yes, and you will find that I am not jesting."

But Fanny did not say yes; she only shook her head and coloured a little.

But as Frederica looked at her earnestly, and quite as if there was no joke in the matter, Fanny said, "I have no fears whatever about my journey. Ten years ago I dare say I should have been more timid, but

now I shall be perfectly satisfied if you c
find a well recommended courier for r
baron. And even this will be superfluous,
I shall have very little to do, except by r
road. However, my maid may prefer the d
nity, as well as the security of being so acc
panied, and therefore, as in duty bound
shall submit to it."

Her view of the case was too rational to
controverted, and one day only interven
between that of her receiving the letter, a
her setting off upon her journey. Her z
and promptitude were rewarded by her fin
ing her aunt, though still ill enough to ma
her presence dearly welcome, yet sufficient
better to relieve all painful fear as to t
result of the malady.

The six months during which they had be
separated, had given Lady Frances time
meditate, with less of anger and suspicio
and with more of affectionate interest, on t
mysterious absence of her nephew. She w

now quite ready to confess that Fanny must have been right, and that she must herself have been wrong in thinking that Lady Otway had been the confidant, either of his departure from Venice, or the place he had chosen for his self-imposed banishment; and they both at length persuaded themselves that poor Fanny's unfortunate lecture had been the real cause of the step he had taken, which they imagined had given him the double motive of displeasure towards her, and alarm on Lady Otway's account, lest others might judge her with more harshness than his anxious (in his judgment, doubtless, his too anxious) sister. And their accordance in this opinion was quite sufficient to ensure very perfect harmony between them for the future; for it was *not* necessary for the satisfaction of Fanny that her aunt should abandon all her long established opinions concerning the unwrung condition of Frederica's heart when Henry was

summoned to England to fulfil his unfortu
engagement.

The steadfast resolution with which
young German girl endured her disapp
ment, was very decidedly beyond the com
hension of Lady Frances Monkton;
Fanny, having at length satisfied herself
this was the case, was sufficiently reasonab
forgive the blunder, and was perfectly sati
by her aunt's confessing that she had certa
wronged her in supposing that though she
not love Henry at Rome, she had listene
his addresses at Venice.

On this point, therefore, there was
longer any danger that they should eith
them make themselves unhappy; but reg
ing the unfortunate Henry himself, it
quite impossible that they could help being
Fanny occasionally, once perhaps in the co
month or six weeks, got a short, sad,
tory sort of letter from him. He
tly been made anxious by the illne

his aunt, but when the danger of losing her was over, he alluded to it no more. He made no observation whatever on her own return to England, nor ever referred in any way either to her journey, or the friends she had left.

The only words that any of these most unsatisfactory epistles contained which could justify the hope that the writer of them contemplated the possibility of ever returning to his native land, was one short sentence written after Fanny had been some months in England, expressive of his regret that she, and her aunt, had not made "the poor, forsaken Harley Court" their home.

"Your not being there," he added, "will considerably lessen my chance of ever seeing it again."

But short and slight as this intimation was, it was quite sufficient to make his aunt and sister at once decide upon leaving the furnished house they had hired in London, and taking up their abode in his house.

This compliance with his wishes was warded by a considerably longer letter fi him than usual, in which too might be tra something more like a feeling of interest the affairs of this nether world than he ever evinced since they parted; for he pressed an earnest hope that they would en the place, and very strongly urged upon th that anything in the way of alteration of kind that they might wish for, either in house, grounds, or establishment, might ordered immediately. The same letter g proof also that the vehement wish he expressed in one of the earliest letters he written to his sister, that he might hencefo be permitted to live—

"The world forgetting, by the world forgot,"

was in some degree modified, for he reque in a postcript that all inquiries concern him might be answered by saying that he acquired so decided a taste for wandering

to render it impossible to guess when he might return to England.

There was nothing very cheering in this, yet both the aunt and niece felt it to be a decided improvement upon the mournful silence respecting the future which he had hitherto preserved.

As to the actual state of his mind, it would indeed have been difficult to guess it from his letters, for had these anxious friends been with him, they would have found it little less so to discover it from himself. Could he, in truth, have himself explained it? He considered himself as having been very harshly, very cruelly treated by Frederica. He had persuaded himself that it was impossible she *could* permit his letter to remain unanswered. Even if her anger was so implacable as to prevent her seeing him, he still thought that she would not permit him to absent himself for ever, without sending him one parting word.

And under this delusion he remained for

several weeks concealed in the most ob
corners of Venice, making a daily vis
inquiry at the post-office, disguised in the
garb worn by the *contadini* of the neigh
ing villages, and generally taking especial
to avoid every spot in which he thought
was danger of his being recognised.
and once only, this caution gave way b
his passionate wish of once more seeing
derica before he finally removed himself
yond her reach for ever, and he effecte
imprudent design by means of placing hi
in an obscure corner at no great distance
the landing-place in front of the Belle
which he knew, by long experience, was a
never left unvisited for many days togeth
his sister and Lady Otway.

The plan succeeded. He saw her,
moreover she saw him too. She saw him,
she knew him; but, fortunately perhaps
the preservation of his incognito, her ang
that moment completely overpowered e
softer feeling.

She felt that his thus coming upon her by surprise was unworthy of him. She felt, too, that the risk he thus made her run of betraying emotions which he well knew it was the most earnest wish of her soul to conceal and to conquer, was not only cruel, but utterly undeserved on her part.

In short, Frederica was more angry at that moment than she had ever felt in the whole course of her life, and it is certain that the one glance she then bestowed upon him was not a glance of tenderness. So greatly was it the reverse indeed, that he never again repeated his daily visit to the post-office in the hope of finding some relenting word that might justify the hope of being permitted to renew a personal intercourse with her. But though he did justice to the sincerity of her displeasure, he did not do justice to the feelings which produced it. Nor could he do so, unless he had known, which most assuredly he did not know, how deeply, how devotedly she had

been attached to him. Had she never lo
him, she would not at the moment of see
him have trembled with more terror than if
assassin had held a dagger at her breast. I
would she, if her wish to act well had b
her only impulse, have felt this terror, but
knew her own weakness. She knew that
all the earnest wishes of her heart to bec
indifferent to Henry Harley, had enabled
to become so, and it was this which cau
her to look upon him as if he were the
being in creation that she would wish to se

And so he was.

Though he knew not, and guessed not
the additional adoration which she deser
for this, he felt that it was the fact, and
was this feeling which drove him into the p
found and almost impenetrable solitude
which he had ever since remained.

It was this interview, though Frede
often endeavoured, and sometimes almost s
ceeded in believing she had been mistaken

was this interview, which had suggested the fears already alluded to that they might meet again, and which had caused the journey from Italy into Germany to be one of the most welcome to her that she had ever made in her life.

WHILE
niece wer
to make th
splendid l
master the
able Lady
watching t
strength wh
attack of
amiable ha

induced to believe that every day which passed brought him nearer to returning health, for never was pain so strong, or patience so weak with him as to produce complaining, or even to lead him seriously to believe that his life was in danger, and that his long-enjoyed strength and activity were gone for ever.

As to any danger to his life, indeed, that was still far from being immediate; his appetite was good, and his nights tranquil: and this, combined with invariable sweetness of temper, was quite enough to lead his cheerful spirit to the persuasion that he had still many years of happy life before him, and moreover, that he might fairly hope for the improvement, if not the perfect recovery of his strength.

But this recovery—nay, even this improvement, came not; and nearly another year rolled on, with no other change among the inhabitants of Schloss Rittesberg, than that Lord Otway became more helpless, his little

son more helpful, his pale, but ever lovely wife more constantly immured, because more constantly devoted to him, and the baron more reconciled to the somewhat dull routine of his daily life than most men of fifty would have found themselves, after having passed about a dozen years in the enjoyment of all that was most exciting to intellect, from one end of Europe to the other.

It could scarcely be accounted as any great variety that poor Lord Otway, notwithstanding all his admirable endurance and resignation, did occasionally lament the uncertainty of his being soon able to instal his beloved Frederica and his little heir, in his noble English mansion; for though he had never, in the whole course of his prosperous and happy life, urged any wish of his own, when it contradicted the wishes of those around him, he had, from time to time, repeatedly expressed his hope that it would not be very long before the baron would either consent to

part with his daughter, or or to accompany her to England.

But though this very reasonable wish had never met the shadow of a contradiction in words, no perfectly favourable opportunity had ever yet been found to put it in execution ; so that now the talking about it, was rather in the way of expressing regret at its present impossibility than anything like a proposal to put it in execution. But the more impossible the doing this obviously became, the more did the kind-hearted baron secretly reproach himself for having so long been the means of delaying a purpose so every way proper.

"I should not so much lament this delay," said poor Lord Otway, "if it were not that I feared the interest of my dear boy might suffer by it ; for, as you well know, my dear baron, planting ought to be always going on. It is a large place, taking in the deer park and all, it certainly is a very large place, but the Otways have never been rich enough to go on

improving it on the large scale that some
our magnates can do, and that too with
feeling any inconvenience in their inco
But we have always been going on, a little
a little, ever since my grandfather bou
Croply Chase, and the naked look in
horizon that used to annoy my good mot
so much, was growing less and less every y
before I lost my first wife, and went abro
But I have been thinking a good deal abou
since my boy was born, and I doubt greatl
that matter has been attended to quite
much as I wish it to be."

Baron Rittesberg not only looked as if
were listening as Lord Otway spoke, which,
say the truth, was sometimes the case, w
his own brain was enjoying itself in spec
tions upon the probable effect to the hun
race of some new invention, or some un
pected discovery in science, but on this pa
cular occasion he not only looked as if
were listening, but he really did listen;

having sat in silent meditation for a minute or two, he replied, "What say you, my lord, to my going over as your agent in this matter? *Your* son, you know, is *my* grandson, and I perfectly agree with you in thinking that his interest may be seriously affected, and the beauty of his hereditary home injured, if the course of improvement you speak of be not carefully and skilfully attended to. Among us, in this land of overgrown forests, our woodcraft skill is oftener called for in clearing than planting, but the eye that has been used to study the effect of the one operation, cannot be quite unapt at the other. If you will give me leave of absence, I know Frederica will; for, in the first place, she will be sure to guess that such an errand would amuse me, and in the next, the interests of her boy would make her willingly dispatch either me or anybody else, to the world's end."

Lord Otway was evidently enchanted at the proposal; he declared himself very decidedly

of opinion that the baron was the most likely man in the world to execute such a commis sion well, and moreover, he felt a very natura pride in letting the noble German see that h had not married his daughter to a man o yesterday.

The executive part of the business was soo smoothed. Lady Otway was most sincerel pleased at the idea of her father's bein released from the dull routine which was a present inevitable at Schloss Rittesberg, an in which she well knew he was pretty nearl as satisfied now, as he could have been twent years before. And as for herself, if indee her husband and her father's affectiona anxiety concerning her really did succeed i making her turn her thoughts towards herse at all, the remembrance of her boy, and o the almost constant occupation he was no affording her, really made her think that the fears lest she should want amusement, were a idle as they were unfounded.

It was long since Lord Otway had looked or felt so well as he did immediately after this important business was settled. He so accurately described his place, particularly those parts of the venerable old chase which he feared his father-in-law would still find neglected, that Baron Rittesberg declared he fancied himself already there, and that he felt almost as much eagerness to turn such picturesque acres to account, as the owner himself could do.

It was perhaps the pleasantest season of the whole year for travelling, for the cheering spring had not yet ripened into the oppressive heat of summer, and it must be confessed that our baron did very greatly enjoy his journey. There assuredly are some people, and it may be feared not a few, who deem it a sin if they too easily permit themselves to feel happy. Such phrases as the following, for instance, have often been uttered in my hearing, nor can

I believe that I have been the only one so favoured :—

"Oh dear! I am sure we ought not to laugh so! Who knows what may be going to happen to us?"

"Really it is quite wrong, and unnatural for us to take pleasure in anything after all we have gone through so lately! It is quite enough to bring a judgment upon us!"

"Don't fix your heart so upon anything! It is like a defiance of Providence! I always tremble when I see people so happy, to think what may come after!" And so on, with ungrateful moanings, more numerous, more long, and more dismal than I have patience to write. But Baron Rittesberg read the stars differently, and notwithstanding his loving and his constant nature, he did not believe that he was committing a sin by feeling gay and happy, although the wife he had so fondly loved had not died more than eighteen months before.

It will readily be believed that his first object on reaching England was to visit Otway House, and he found that the venerable owner had described both the mansion and its domain so accurately, that the chief object of his mission was at once made manifest to him, and the carrying it forward proved to be a matter of greatly less difficulty than he expected; for the anxious old lord had scarcely done his steward justice in the estimate he had taken of his skill and activity, and the quick-sighted grandfather of the future Viscount saw no reason whatever to be dissatisfied at the state in which he found the property.

There was probably a good deal more surprise felt than expressed, even in looks, by the old servants of the family at hearing a man who, in their estimation, still looked very nearly young and very nearly handsome, talk of their venerable master as his son-in-law. His credentials, however, were too

satisfactory to admit of any question on the subject, and no possible doubt existing concerning the fact, the inquiries which, with many respectful apologies, they took the liberty of putting to him respecting the precious heir, were not a few.

They were all answered, however, with unwearied good humour, and the satisfaction of the old housekeeper was rendered complete by the baron's pointing out to her the portrait of a little Vandyke-painted Otway, of about three years old, which he assured her, and by no means untruly, bore a most remarkable likeness to his grandson.

This important business over, and the sufficiently voluminous letters dispatched to Schloss Rittesberg, the wandering baron began to ask himself what he should do next.

Frederica had not let him depart till he had promised not to return before the end of a month. She knew what the unfettered habits of his life had been, and could not

but feel that the infirmities of Lord Otway prevented their being so now. It was, therefore, with pleasure, as sincere as it was unselfish, that she saw him depart, and so well did he understand this that he had not scrupled to give her the promise she demanded.

How, then, should he dispose of the fortnight's holiday which still remained to him. He had so repeatedly visited England since his marriage that the business of regular sight-seeing had no attraction for him. In fact, the only thing that *had* was Harley Court; but about going to Harley Court the Baron von Rittesberg, prompt as he was in decision upon most occasions, had not fully made up his mind. He had loved and liked the owner of it better than he had ever loved and liked any man; and of late he had, perhaps, loved and liked his sister better than he had ever loved and liked any woman, save one.

It might appear at first sight that both

these sentiments would have tended the
way, and that both would have led hi
make a visit to Harley Court. The
however, was otherwise. His love and l
for Fanny did, indeed, propel him
strongly thither, but his feelings to
Henry had precisely a contrary tend
Nor can this appear extraordinary to
one who will have the kindness to reme
that Henry Harley had removed himself
Venice, broken up the familiar intercou
which he had seemed to delight, conceale
place of his most mysterious retreat, a
considerably above a twelvemonth leavin
friend with whom he had appeared so
to share every thought, in total ignoranc
only of his condition but his existence.
to the real cause of the unhappy young
self-banishment he was as far from susp
it as his little honourable grandson. S
times, indeed, it occurred to him tha
absence of Henry was the consequence of

unhappy love affair; but even so, he could not excuse his total want of consideration to a friend to whom he had declared himself to be so strongly attached. It was just possible that to his aunt and sister such secresy might be considered as decorous, if some imprudent and guilty elopement were the cause of his absence, but not so to him.

In short, the Baron von Rittesberg was about as angry with Henry Harley as it was well possible he could be with any man. And such being the case, how was it possible, as he repeatedly asked himself, how was it possible that he could volunteer himself as a guest at his house? To all these self-questionings, self continued for a long time to answer, "It is not possible;" but at last he apparently got weary of perpetually listening to the same note, for before he had fully decided upon going elsewhere, he began to tell himself that Henry had by no means behaved in such a manner as that he should

be considered as the only important, or ev
as the most important individual of t
Harley family, and that, on the contrary, bc
Lady Frances and her niece Fanny, inste
of being neglected in consequence of l
delinquencies, ought rather to receive eve
possible attention in proof of the sympat
felt for the very painful situation in whi
Henry had placed them.

No sooner had this very proper and ve
natural idea suggested itself, than all t
constitutional promptitude and alertness
Baron von Rittesberg was restored, and
as short a time as it was possible for him
announce to the ladies at Harley Court th
he proposed paying them a visit, and
receive in return their assurance that th
should be most happy to see him, he set
for the mansion of his absent, and, as
was now disposed to call him, his faithle
friend.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AND most happy to see him the forsaken ladies certainly were; for not any of the prejudices of Lady Frances against the little-understood Frederica had mixed themselves with her feelings of admiration for the baron, who she declared to be, in spite of all his eccentricities, by far the most brilliant person in conversation that she had ever known.

That a visit from him, therefore, in their dignified but by no means gay retreat, should be welcome to her was extremely natural. Nor was it unnatural that Fanny also should

feel pleasure from this visit. That she
feel it. and to a degree, too, that produ
something very like nervous agitation, cat
be denied; but she accounted for this
herself by thinking that seeing the baron
almost like seeing the beloved Frederica
self,—and no wonder, then, that it sh
make her heart beat. Nor was the B
von Rittesberg at all insensible to the plea
of seeing Fanny Harley again; but he
not, like her, think it necessary to acc
for this agreeable emotion by referring to
cause for it more distant than herself.

The love of a man of fifty is not ex
like the love of a man of twenty-five,
though both should be of the superior
of mortals. It is not so nearly made up
the receipt of Silvias. It is not all mad
of sighs and tears, and although there ma
abundance of faith and service in it, yet
is a vast deal less of fantasy. But, n
theless, it may be very truly and con

stated that the Baron von Rittesberg was in love with Fanny Harley.

He had himself rather began to suspect as much just when she went off in such violent haste from his castle in order to attend upon her sick annt; but if any doubts still lingered in his mind respecting the nature of his feelings towards her, they were all very effectually removed at the moment of meeting her again.

"There is no doubt about it."—Thus ran his mental soliloquy.—"I certainly am very desperately in love. But it is likely enough that if I tell her so she will reply by gently hinting, in a lady-like manner, that I am an old fool for my pains."

But Baron Rittesberg was not a man likely to listen to the gloomy grumblings of despair, instead of the sweet, gay voice of hope, and he had not been very long at Harley Court before he determined not to leave it till he knew, upon better authority

than any which his own conjectures could supply, whether he had the power of persuading Fanny Harley to be his wife, or not. His strong feeling of displeasure against her brother rather stimulated him to take this step, than the contrary, for having ascertained from both the ladies, that they had been left as completely in ignorance of his abode as himself, he felt greatly disposed to make common cause with them, and to prove to him that, dearly as he had once been loved by them all, they could, nevertheless, make up their minds to be happy, even though he had so cruelly forsaken them.

In short, he very courageously determined to propose himself (though somewhat past fifty), with his remote German castle, and its dark forests, as a husband to Fanny Harley, aged twenty-nine, in the midst of the splendour of the noble mansion that was her home, and had been her birth-place.

Having so decided, there was no farther

vacillation about the act, but he still felt a little uncertainty as to the manner of it.

Should he write to her? Or should he speak to her? Should he begin the process after the manner of younger men, and attack her by a little insidious tenderness before he ventured to declare his object explicitly?

No. He did not think that would suit him; so at length he merely resolved upon finding an opportunity of speaking to her alone, and then to let the manner of it be left to chance.

It was no very difficult thing to find this opportunity, for Fanny's daily habit every morning as soon as breakfast was over, was to visit the flower-garden with her basket and her scissors, no flowers appearing so precious to her as those which she selected herself. But in this occupation she was never joined by her aunt, who was very decidedly of opinion that the old-fashioned way of letting the

gardener bring in such flowers as he thought it most discreet to gather, was the best.

The baron, however, had never yet failed to accompany her in these predatory excursions, and therefore his doing so on the particular morning which he had fixed upon as that which should decide his fate, had nothing remarkable in it. There was, however, one difficulty which arose from the pertinacious habit of the head gardener, who, under the semblance of dutiful respect, was wont to be for ever at hand in readiness to wait upon Miss Harley in this daily business, his real object being, as Fanny perfectly well knew, to check her hand and her scissors when she got among his favourite "specimens."

The baron, however, contrived somehow or other to make Fanny believe that if she really wished for something peculiarly fragrant for her own favourite vase in the library, the thing which would most effectually answer her

purpose, would be a branch from a woodbine with which he had made acquaintance the day before.

Fanny very peaceably suffered herself to be led to it, and found that it made part of the decoration of a somewhat remote bower quite out of the way of the gardener and his treasures.

"Sit down here for a moment, will you, Fanny?" said the audacious baron, taking her basket from her hand, and placing it on one side of the entrance. Fanny coloured a little, and perhaps something like the shadow of a thought crossed her mind, which might be expressed by the words, "What is to come next?"

However, it did not enter her head to make any objection to the proposal; no one ever did object to anything that Baron Rittesberg proposed; and so, she walked into the arbour and sat down.

It might be that she felt a little surprised

that the baron did not sit down too, but he did no such thing; for the space of about half a minute he positively stood at the entrance of the tower with his back towards her, but then he turned round and placed himself before her, looking down upon her fair, up-turned face with a meditative sort of air that caused the colour again to mount into her cheeks. When he first turned round and thus stood before her, she had looked very innocently up into his face, but now she looked down upon the pebbles which covered the floor, and perhaps it was this appearance of cowardice on her part, which restored the courage of the baron, for he immediately said, "Fanny! If I were to ask you to be my wife, what answer would you give me?" Fanny, for a short space, remained profoundly silent; she was evidently giving the question consideration; but at length she looked up and said, rather demurely, but with something a little approaching to a smile at the corner of her

mouth, "If you did, I think I should say yes."

* * * *

Of all that immediately followed there is no need to speak. Lady Frances did not look at all shocked, nor even very much surprised, when she heard the news; and as to Frederica, if ever a mortal woman found the way of pouring out her heart upon paper, she might have been said to do it in the charming letter which expressed her joy at the approaching event.

Poor Lord Otway, too, dictated a most sincere and cordial congratulation, and there was but one point from which anything *not* pleasant and satisfactory was likely to come—nothing pleasant, certainly, could be reasonably hoped for from Henry.

As to the baron, though as happy as he ought to be, (and that is saying much) at the prospect of marrying such a woman as Fanny

Harley, he could not, even for her sake, div
himself of the feeling that he had been
that is to say, unkindly used, by Henry; a
this poor Fanny knew full well, together w
many other things of which the unsuspici
baron was profoundly ignorant, but all
which, though they might serve to explain
brother's conduct, were far enough from mak
it justifiable.

But even this explanation, unsatisfactory
it was, could not be permitted to reach Ba
Rittesberg. Fanny felt she had no right
disclose what it was quite evident that L
Otway had deemed it best to conceal; a
this necessity for reserve, joined to the pain
consciousness that her future husband c
sidered himself as having been unworth
treated by her dearly, fondly, ever-lo
brother, *was* decidedly a drawback to
felicity, but it was the only one.

It was quite as much to spare this d
brother the pain of any enforced intercou

with the father of Lady Otway, as to render smooth what, without this precaution on her part, might very probably have been made the reverse, that she did not announce her marriage to him till it was over. Baron Rittesberg had expressed himself so strongly to her on the subject of the *ungrateful* indifference manifested by Henry to himself, that she felt it to be impossible they could be brought into any correspondence respecting her settlements, without the risk of such painful expressions being used on the subject of Henry's conduct, as would render much more difficult, if not absolutely impossible, the perfect reconciliation which she trusted would be the ultimate result of the near connexion between them, of which she was to be the tie; nor was any correspondence of the kind at all necessary. Fanny's twenty-five thousand pounds stood in her own name in the Bank of England, and was settled upon her and her heirs. And the baron's settlement of all he had to dispose of upon his

daughter, which was made at the time of marriage with Lord Otway. did not affect hereditary property, being inherited by a heir, nor prevent his widow from havi dowager's claim upon it.

The only notice therefore which was tr mitted to Henry respecting his sister's r riage, was by a short letter from her signed, "Panny von Rittesberg," and wl was consigned to the care of the ban through whose hands alone they had any c munication with him.

With affectionate attention on the part b of the baron and his bride to the comfort the almost imprisoned Lady Otway, the m riage was brought about with as little delay possible, the baron's leave of absence hav been prolonged for a week or two, to preve the necessity of a second journey. La Frances, though in every way satisfied wi the marriage, declined the earnest invitati of the newly married couple to accompan

them into Germany, she having engaged herself to pay a visit to her recently married nephew in Scotland; but she protested, and very sincerely, that she had booked their invitation, and with the fullest hope and intention of hereafter accepting it.

CHAPTER XIX.

If I have not yet succeeded in making r
readers understand how true and how stro
was the attachment between Frederica a
Fanny, I should not make them understand
now, even though I were to detail, at t
very fullest length, all that passed betwe
them after Fanny's arrival at her Germ
castle, in the character of Lady Otway's ste
mother.

Invidious as this title often is, and oft
very unfairly, it did not produce its usua

repulsive effect on Frederica. There was, on the contrary, a new claim made on her affection, by the revival of her father's happy spirits, which was felt as it deserved to be felt, and valued at its worth.

But notwithstanding that the tie between them was now so close a one, and that the hearts of both led them so cordially to profit by it, there was no greater avowal of confidence between them on the subject of Henry, than heretofore, and its being so was a proof of great delicacy and discretion in both, but in neither was it from any want of confidence.

Month after month passed on, during which his name was never pronounced aloud by any of them. In reply to the short letter, in which Fanny announced her marriage to him, she had received one shorter still, in which he told her, with more bitter feeling on his own account, than affectionate consideration on hers, that she must be aware that the connexion she had formed was one which, under

the circumstances, must probably have the effect of separating them for ever.

That this caused her great pain is very certain, but it would have caused her more, had she not believed that a time would come when the faults of her unhappy brother would be forgiven, in consideration of his sufferings.

Without this hope, she could scarcely have been so happy as she now found herself. In truth, she was a very happy wife. It was so delightful to her to find that the baron could and did make her his companion in that best sense of the word which could, in his case, have been used to very few. She had, moreover, the heartfelt pleasure of knowing that her society was a comfort to her beloved friend as great as it was needful.

The condition of poor Lord Otway had become very sad. He was completely a cripple, and though his sweet temper never forsook him, it was impossible not to see that

he suffered more than he would acknowledge. Yet still he lingered on, nor was he relieved from this painfully prolonged existence till after Fanny had given an infant uncle to his little heir.

The joy produced by this happy event was shared by him with a warmth of feeling which showed that his heart, at least, had escaped the paralysis which had seized his limbs; but he did not survive it many days; and poor Frederica fared the better, perhaps, for having her own heart divided between the sadness, equally natural and sincere, which the death of one so truly amiable, and so truly attached to her occasioned, and anxiety for the health of the dear invalid, to whom this sudden death, so close beside her baby's cradle, gave a severe shock.

But the new-born baby prospered, nevertheless, and the group around was beyond all question a not unhappy group, in spite of their sable garments.

The first interruption to this truly do-
mestic happiness arose from the necessity
which Lady Otway felt herself to be under
of going, at least for a short time, to Otway
Park. The only promise with which good
Lord Otway had burthened her widowhood
and the guardianship of her son, which he
had wholly confided to her, was that the
little boy should not pass a year after his
death without being taken to the ancient
home that was to be his, and to be permitted
to remain there for one year, that a feeling
of personal interest for him might be created
among his tenants and neighbours by his
presence.

Beyond this he put no restraint upon her
whatever. He had himself been too much
a citizen of the world to have any very
strong predilection for a strictly English
education. He expressed a wish, but exacted
no promise on the subject, that he should be
entered at one of the two English universities;

it may be doubted, perhaps, if any English gentleman has yet died at so advanced an age, who would have allowed that England had more than two—but excepting this, the young mother, and the young guardian, who had not attained her own majority more than a year or two, was left as free as air as to the future residence both of herself and her boy. For the first six months after the death of Lord Otway, his widow, therefore, felt that she might continue to enjoy the domestic seclusion which so well suited her condition, with less interruption at Schloss Rittesberg than she could hope for at Otway Park, and she therefore scrupled not to comply with her father's and her dear Fanny's wish that she should remain there. But this peaceful interval enjoyed, and over, no farther opposition could, with propriety, be offered to her keeping the only promise which her amiable husband had asked from her. It was then early spring, and no

season could be more desirable for travelling. Might it not even tempt her supremely happy father, together with his wife and infant son, to accompany her?

In truth, they needed not any such temptation. Leaving the infant son out of the question, it would have been impossible to find any party more earnestly inclined to accept an invitation, than were the Schloss Rittesberg party to accept that of the dowager Lady Otway. The necessary arrangements, therefore, were very gaily and speedily made, the two nursery establishments were easily blended into one, and the party set forth quite as cheerfully as it was possible they could do, under existing circumstances.

The arrival of an heir to the Otway property could not be other than a jubilee at Otway Park, notwithstanding the sable garb of his mother; for a distant, and an unpromising relative had been so long looked to,

and so greatly dreaded, as the heir to the property, that this direct descendant of the long line which had possessed it was an event which could only be hailed as an especial blessing.

The Baron Rittesberg, moreover, had left very favourable memories of himself at the Park, and the air of old acquaintanceship with which he addressed, and was addressed by its venerable domestics, was a source of very considerable comfort to all parties.

And now again the trio found themselves exceedingly happy and comfortable; and so they continued to feel till a letter reached the Baroness Rittesberg from her aunt, Lady Frances Monkton, stating her earnest hope that they would all come to Harley Court before they all, or any of them, thought of returning to Germany.

"My nephew Harley," she added, "has, since the marriage of his sister, so completely put the place not only at my disposition, but

under my care, that I should really feel some scruple at leaving it for any interval long enough to permit my taking a journey to Schloss Rittesberg to see you all. Therefore, if you do not come to me, what chance have I of making the acquaintance of my great nephew?"

Fanny felt that this was very strong pleading, and when her husband's eye turned to the perusal of her face, he read plainly enough there that her wishes accorded with those of her aunt. This was very natural, and quite as it ought to be; nevertheless, the Baron Rittesberg, fond husband as he was, did not feel at all disposed to indulge her. He felt that Henry Harley had disappointed him most completely, and it was a species of disappointment that beyond all things was calculated to wound him deeply. He had both loved and admired Henry from the bottom of his heart, and he had firmly believed that he was equally loved in return.

In this he now believed himself to have been most entirely mistaken, and the idea of volunteering a visit to his house, in the character of his brother-in-law, before that character had even been welcomed, or even acknowledged by a single word or sign addressed to himself, was very far indeed from being agreeable to him.

He walked forth alone into the wide-spreading domain of his little grandson, under pretence of superintending the still progressing plantations; but, in truth, he was thinking neither of the beauty or the profit of the little lord's possessions, for he was wholly occupied in taking counsel with himself how he might best manage in order to refuse doing what he so well knew his young wife wished him to do, without appearing to be intolerably cruel and unkind. At length he returned to the house, having made up his mind not to command, but to consult his wife.

Perhaps he was right, for Fanny was
woman who perfectly well deserved to
treated as a reasonable being; but it was
painful business for all that, and certainl
not the less so to her, because she felt th
her husband was right in refusing to becom
the uninvited guest of a man who had
carefully avoided all intercourse with him
Henry had done.

And yet how easy, how very easy did sh
feel it would be, to make him change h
view of the whole matter, by the simple pr
of uttering to him a few words of the
But a feeling stronger than her
her aunt—stronger even
exculpate her unhapp
the charge of indi
was her
secret
k

had never been revealed to him; and Fanny remained resolute in her determination that her own union with the father should not be the means of betraying the carefully-guarded secret of the daughter. But Fanny herself, as she was well aware, knew little, or rather nothing of what might have passed between Lady Otway and her brother, before the marriage of either, or afterwards. All she could have told, for all she knew, was that Henry had been deeply attached to Frederica, although the unhappy entanglement which ended in his marriage with Miss Selcroft had prevented his declaring it. She might also have stated her belief that this attachment had never been eradicated, which might well enough have accounted for his believing that it had been his duty to avoid her,—but even this she felt that she had no right to disclose, when it had been so clearly evident that it was the wish of her friend to conceal it. So

the interview between the baron and hi
ended by her affectionately telling hin
whatever he wished to do, that would b
she wished should be done.

CHAPTER XX.

BUT when the Baroness Rittesberg again found herself alone, not all her conjugal love and obedience could prevent her feeling that this total separation from her brother and her aunt was a sad drawback to her happiness; and then, being of a hopeful nature, she began asking herself if it were, indeed, inevitable? About half an hour of steady, rational reflection led her to think that it was not. She remembered that though she herself felt bound in honour to preserve a secret that was not her own, Frederica was under

no such bondage. It was true, indeed, that she had never as yet so far lifted the veil, which the reserve of her friend had placed between them, as ever yet to have spoken to her at all on the subject of Henry's attachment, but, nevertheless, enough had passed between them at the time of his withdrawing himself from them all at Venice, to make her feel certain that Frederica knew that she was not ignorant of it.

Moreover, the time was past when there would have been an impropriety, bordering, perhaps, on sin, in alluding to the subject when speaking to Frederica; and the result of all this was, that Fanny determined to give her dearly-beloved step-daughter a little lecture on the cruelty of letting Henry appear, in the eyes of her father, to be a more utterly worthless and graceless individual than he really was.

The subject, though a very delicate one, was easily opened by Fanny's telling Lady

Otway what the baron's final decision had been respecting Lady Frances Monkton's invitation.

"My father told me so," replied Frederica, slightly colouring.

"It will be a sad disappointment to my aunt," said Fanny.

"I hope it will not be very long before she pays us a nice visit at Schloss Rittesberg," replied Lady Otway.

Fanny was silent for a moment, and then said,—"It would scarcely be fair to beguile my aunt into a visit to your dear father, and my dear husband, Frederica, while she is left so profoundly ignorant as she is at present of the changed sentiments of the baron towards Henry. My unhappy brother appears to him, and must appear to him, not only as a capricious acquaintance, but as a most ungrateful friend. Henry has been a very unfortunate, and a very unhappy man, Frederica—but he has never been ungrateful

for the kindness of your father; nor, lit
as my dear husband guesses it, has he e
ceased to hold him dearer to his heart th
any other friend whom it has been his fortu
to meet with through life."

Had Fanny looked at Lady Otway at t
moment, which she did not, she might p
chance have been terrified by her extre
paleness. But Fanny, though very much c
vinced that she was doing what was rig
felt, nevertheless, very much embarrassed, a
the consequence of this was that she pursu
the work upon which she was employed w
such diligence, that she never took her e
off for a single moment.

"Let us talk of this another time," s
Lady Otway, suddenly rising, and retreati
with a rapid step towards the door, which
had opened, passed through, and closed af
her, before her stepmother had obtained
single glance at her face.

From the room in which this short c

ference was held, to that constantly occupied in the morning by her father, Lady Otway passed with a very rapid, though not perhaps with a very steady step. On entering it she found him, as she expected, alone, and reading. She gave herself no time for preface. "Father!" she said, "dearly as we love one another, I have kept you in ignorance during perhaps the most important portion of my life, of the only feeling which ever rivalled in intensity my love for you."

Baron Rittesberg, who on her entrance had raised his eyes from the volume he was reading, and fixed them on her with the loving smile which ever greeted her approach, seemed petrified by this strange address. Nor were the words alone the cause of this unmeasured astonishment. Frederica looked as he had never seen her look before. That beautiful pale calmness, which, while it suggested anything rather than an idea of insensibility, seemed to announce a degree of self-possession

that precluded the possibility of any painfully vehement display of feeling, had given plac to a flushed cheek, and an expression of agita tion and anxiety in the usually placid, medi tative eye, which must have been startling t any one even slightly acquainted with her, an might well astonish her father, to whom th sweet serenity of her aspect had been th brightest sunshine of his life.

Having gazed at her for a momemt, h abruptly rose from his chair, and approache her. "My darling child!" he exclaime "what can you have to tell me that shou occasion such strong emotion? Sit down, m sweet Frederica! Whatever it is, do you n know that I shall listen to it only as your ow heart would do—if it be pain to you, it mu be pain to me likewise. But you cannot fe reproaches from me, dearest."

"No! my own father, I have no such fear she replied. "My heart does not reproa me much, and I think I should be more like

to meet severity from my own heart than from yours. I am not going either to accuse or to defend myself; it is the cause of another that I must plead to you, and you must give my pleading a patient and a candid hearing, father!"

"I will behave as well as I can, Frederica. But if any human being has voluntarily given you pain, I do not promise that I shall listen to the detail with patience," returned the baron, with a look more nearly approaching sternness, than she had ever seen him wear before.

"I have, thank heaven! no such detail to give," she replied. "But yet I must bespeak your patience, father, because it is my opinion that appearances have led you to form an injurious and a mistaken estimate of one for whom I earnestly wish to recover your good opinion, and of whom I think I can form a more correct judgment than you can do.

I wish to speak to you, father, of Henry Harley."

"And why should you suppose, Frederica," returned the baron, while a slight frown passed across his brow, "that you are more capable than I am, of forming a correct judgment of Henry Harley? Is it because you fancy that you know his character well?—I once thought the same respecting him, myself; but I have discovered that I was entirely mistaken; nor do I think it at all improbable that you, too, may one of these days make the same discovery. But what has occurred to make you mention him to me now? Have you heard any news of him? I have learned to be quite aware that he is very far indeed from being the sort of person I fancied him to be, but I still feel for my wife's sake, as you must know, sufficient interest about him to wish to be made acquainted with any news you may have heard concerning him."

"I have much to tell concerning him, but you must be very patient, father,—and let me tell you all, will you, without stopping me? I might not be able to begin again."

The baron, who saw that her complexion varied, and that her lips trembled as she spoke, seemed to catch suddenly a sort of shadowy notion that it was not of Henry only that she was about to speak.

All frowns, all sternness vanished instantly, and drawing his chair somewhat nearer to that on which Lady Otway had placed herself, he prepared to listen to her with an earnestness of attention that promised well for his hearing and comprehending every word she was about to utter.

It was no light, no easy task, that the greatly agitated Frederica had set herself. The fully displaying, to the eyes of her father, every feeling that it had been for years the great business of her life to conceal, could not be done without a very painful effort; and it

is probable that nothing could have given her strength, energy, and courage to make it, but the ardent wish to justify the unhappy Henry in the eyes of her father, which the words of Fanny had inspired.

But having once entered upon the theme, it seemed to inspire her as she proceeded. She narrated the whole history of Henry's Lake of Killarney adventures, exactly as she had heard it from him when they were seated among the ruins of the Colisæum. She confessed all her own hopes, and all the joy they caused her. And then, as rapidly as might be, she narrated the cause of his sudden recall to England, and the marriage which was its inevitable consequence. Of her own feelings afterwards, of her struggles to conceal and to control the profound attachment which she had conceived for the man who had so involuntarily deceived her, she said but little; but there was no need she should say much, for there was that in her look and voice as she

alluded to this struggle, which made her father comprehend far better than any words could have done, that she had suffered greatly.

And then followed a statement, slightly, but powerfully sketched, of the state of mind and feeling which had led her to become the wife of Lord Otway. It was evident enough to her father that she had consented to this marriage in the full confidence that it would be in her power and in her will to contribute to the happiness of the amiable old man, and that the doing so, by leading her to the performance of active duties, would furnish the most effectual antidote against the state of mind she most wished to avoid.

So far, though the narrative had cost her much, she had been sustained under the effort it required, by perceiving that her father comprehended, and went along with her. But the worst was still to come. How should she find power to speak of what her feelings were when she saw her husband and her child pre-

sented to Harley? Harley, free from ever
tie that had prevented their union when the
parted last! Yet even this was less difficul
than the attempting to explain all that hap
pened afterwards.

No one but Frederica herself could know
how innocent, how more than innocent—how
truly excellent were the motives which led he
to wish that this meeting, which she would s
gladly have avoided, should eventually becom
a source of pleasure to them all. Nor coul
even *she* explain how it came to pass tha
from a consciousness of constant suffering an
constant restraint, she, by perfectly insensibl
degrees, at last became aware that both t
Henry and to her luckless self, this constan
intercourse, embarrassed and restrained as i
was, had still a pleasure in it. That she had
felt this, is certain, because she was awakene
to a feeling of startling danger, upon discover
ing that she was no longer so miserable as sh
had been, or at any rate that her existence

was no longer so languidly *monotone* as almost to resemble an intermediate state between life and death. She had trembled as her frightened conscience told her that she was not yet insensible to the pleasure of seeing and listening to the man from whom she most truly and sincerely wished to separate herself for ever, had she possessed the power to do so. On this period, which pained her in remembrance beyond every other, she paused not for a moment, and if her father guessed that such a period had existed, it was only because she passed over with such rapidity the precise epoch of Henry's departure from Venice. And yet she felt that her sad tale was not complete if the explanation which took place at their last interview were omitted. For two or three minutes she remained silent, and painfully embarrassed, but when she spoke again the difficulty was over, for she desperately screwed her courage to the avowal, and said, "Once, and once only, Mr. Harley so greatly forgot

the respect he owed me, as to speak of lov
It was during the last moments we ever passe
together—I never saw him afterwards. An
he was made to understand that it was m
determination never to see him again; an
then it was that he withdrew himself from yo
all; and where he has concealed himself, you
dear wife knows no more than you or I do
Could he explain all this to you, father
Could he do it without committing a wors
offence than any with which you now charg
him?"

When Lady Otway ceased speaking, th
baron rose from his chair and silently ap
proaching his daughter, who rose at his ap
proach, he threw his arms round her, an
pressed her closely to his heart. "My dea
my matchless child!" he exclaimed, "I though
I knew you so well, my Frederica! I fancie
that I so thoroughly understood and did yo
justice! But you have defeated some of m
cleverest speculations, my dear child. I ha

fancied that my own easy temper had in you been crystallized, as it were, into something that almost approached indifference. But you are a much more human, yet a much more finely finished creature than I imagined you to be! Heaven bless you, my sweet love, and make your future life less full of pain and difficulty than the past has been! . . . . But I must go to my poor wife, Frederica. Perhaps she does not know quite all that you have now told me, but I doubt not she knows enough to make her feel that her unfortunate brother does not quite deserve all the violent resentment I have felt against him. I think now, Frederica, that I shall indulge her with a visit to Harley Court."

And having rapidly uttered these words, he pressed his lips upon her forehead, and hurried out of the room.

"Is it possible that the mere act of telling him that I have been unhappy, should suffice

to make me feel as light hearted and as free from sorrow as I do now?" thought Lady Otway, as she retraced her steps to her own apartment, which she had so lately left with the heavy consciousness of being extremely miserable. She could not comprehend it; but there was certainly no mistake as to the fact, that she went into the nursery, and began playing with her little boy with a gayer spirit than she had ever done since her eyes were first blessed with the sight of him.

Meanwhile, the baron sought, and found his wife. She was by no means looking so happy at that particular moment as her friend Frederica; for she was meditating on the strange chain of events which seemed likely to separate her for ever from the brother to whom she had ever been so devotedly attached, and from the aunt, who had been so truly like a second mother to her. Nothing could be more likely to chase such dismal

thoughts as the approach of her husband, for she loved him fondly and truly; and even had she loved him less, she could hardly have looked at him, as he entered at that moment, without feeling that his aspect was well calculated to drive away all melancholy meditations, for he looked absolutely radiant with happiness. Nobody, by-the-bye, save himself, knew how deeply and how unceasingly he had grieved over the faithlessness and the loss of Henry.

The conversation which now took place between his wife and him was much longer than that which he had held with his daughter; for Fanny had a good deal to say, which Frederica had left unsaid, not a word of which was idly spoken, or fell on an idle ear, and the good baron found still more reason to confess that well as he had hitherto loved his daughter, he had not loved her half enough. And as to the offending Henry,

though he did not in set terms pronounce his full acquittal, yet he contrived, before the matrimonial tête-à-tête was over, to let his wife perceive that it was not absolutely impossible that he might be forgiven.

CHAPTER XXI.

I DOUBT if these pages will have been perused thus far by any reader who would not be able to tell the sequel of the tale without my assistance. Madame Rittesberg, having been admitted to a private interview with Henry's banker, contrived, in the character of an anxious sister, to coax Henry's address out of him. And this was the only real difficulty which lay in the way of his speedy re-union with all he most dearly loved, and had most successfully contrived to render miserable. Fortunately, however, for the un-

broken smoothness of the harmony which followed this reunion, he gave very satisfactory evidence that his solitary meditations had improved his judgment, for he listened to his sister Fanny with the most laudable deference and attention, when she pointed out to him the absolute necessity of postponing anything like a proposal of marriage to the widow of Lord Otway till her mourning was completely laid aside; and though it must be acknowledged that the anxious and observant baroness found it necessary to repeat this caution rather more than once during the interval, her brother proved that he was not unworthy of the care she bestowed upon him, for no offer of his hand was made in any way that could justify his being accused of such impropriety till the time stipulated for by his sister, and his discretion was rewarded by the offer being accepted, when it was made in a manner that was highly satisfactory.

It is rarely that two families are so nearly

blended into one as was the case with those of the father and daughter, the brother and sister, whose adventures I have been detailing. Lady Frances Monkton, too, notwithstanding her great respect for her noble nephew and his wealthy wife, soon found that she had very little time to bestow upon them, for when she was not with Fanny, she found it absolutely necessary to be with Henry. But greatly as she admired, and sincerely as she ended by loving Frederica, she never could quite bring herself to believe that she had been in love with her nephew, deeply, passionately in love with him, at the time she made that remarkable morning call upon them at Rome, immediately after being informed that he was gone to England to be married to another lady.

It was not for this reason, however, but because Lady Frances lived to see three young barons and four young baronesses born at Schloss Rittesberg, that she left her fifty

thousand pounds to Fanny, and not a sixpence of it to Henry; neither did she do it without consulting Henry on the subject, who not only approved, but was greatly comforted by her decision, for he had often felt regret that his own wife was so much richer than he wished her to be, the whole of her mother's property being settled upon her and her children, after the death of the baron.

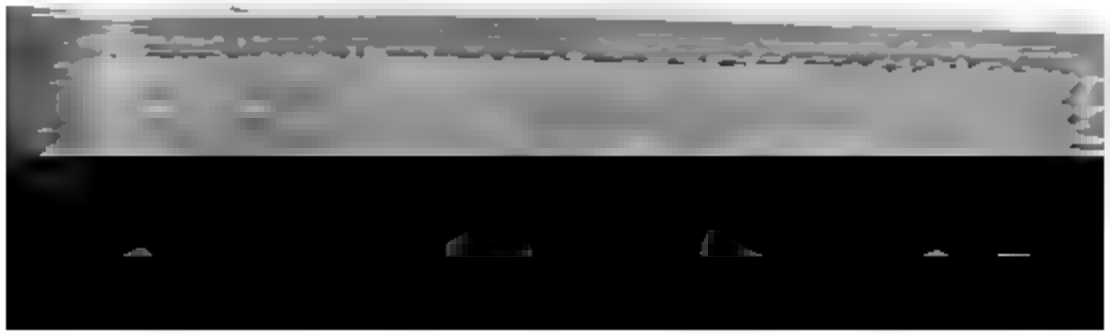
This bequest of Lady Frances, however, set his heart very much at rest upon that point, and few men, who begin life so unwisely as he had done, have the happiness of outliving their sorrows, as well as their follies, so completely as Henry Harley; but then he certainly had a very extraordinary woman for his second wife.

He was fortunate, too, in the character of the little lord his step-son, for the boy seemed to have the temper of his father and the intellect of his mother, and one of the prettiest things to be seen at Harley Court was the

way the little Lord Otway watched over the lesser tribe of young Harleys that came to share his mother's affection with him.

All that I have been able to learn of the Selcroft family is that Mr. Selcroft never became a bishop, nor even a dean; but a much worse misfortune than that was the death of his wife; for being tempted, about a year after this event, to propose himself to a lady possessed of several thousand pounds, he was unfortunately accepted, and from that hour had never again the power in his own house of ever hinting that he believed himself in possession of his own soul. His daughter Lucy married very suitably and very happily, and had more than once the pleasure of renewing her acquaintance both with Henry and Fanny, who never, either of them lost an opportunity of proving to her that she was well and affectionately remembered.

THE END.



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